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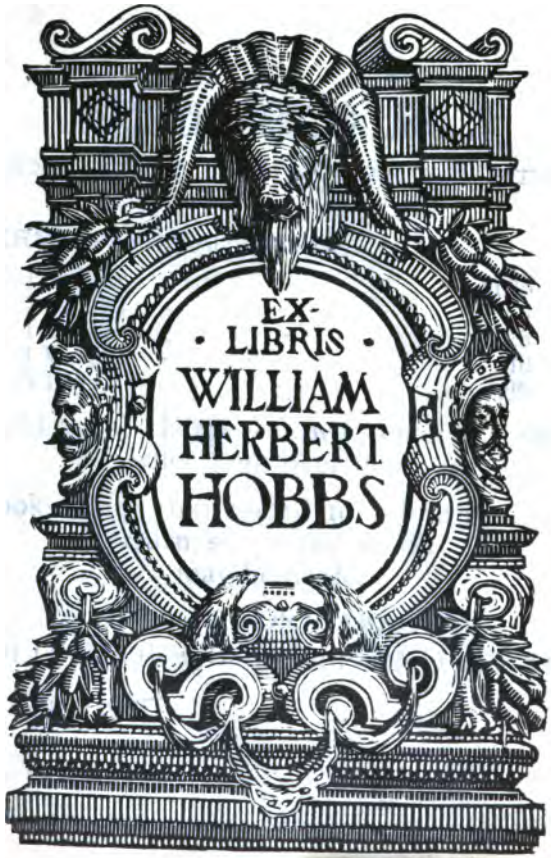

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Jos. P. Faulkner

EIGHTEEN MONTHS

ON A

GREENLAND WHALER.

BY

JOSEPH P. FAULKNER.

NEW YORK:
PUBLISHED FOR THE AUTHOR.
111 & 113 WILLIAM STREET.
1878.

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TO

Mrs. E. W. LORD,

SUPERINTENDENT OF THE NEW YORK STATE INSTITUTION FOR THE BLIND

AT BATAVIA,

THIS WORK IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

BY ONE OF HER PUPILS,

IN REMEMBRANCE OF HER UNWEARIED ATTENTION AND UNSELFISH

DEVOTION TO THEIR BEST INTERESTS.

THE AUTHOR.

JUNE, 1877.

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PREFACE.

I am well aware of the fact that the public has for a long time back been solicited in behalf of new publications in a well-nigh distracting degree. Modern facilities for book-making have ushered upon the world a new breed of the *genus homo*, known as the book-agent, making a fourth to be added to the list of Solomon's insatiables. And with an eye like the "ancient mariner's" and a power like that of Scheherazade for spinning a yarn, this nondescript is as far-reaching as civilization, ubiquitous as advertisements of quack medicine and persistently penetrative as the North wind, and generally about as unwelcome.

I, however, must in justice to myself and my supporters in the enterprize, repudiate the idea of now appearing in such forbidding and unpropitious form. In the first place the little work which I claim the honor of introducing to your patronage, is so unpretentious that I have not got to din your hearing with any warbled melody, or

hoarsely uttered gutturals in its praise. In the next place, as it is quite non-commital on subjects apt to cause bickerings, it is not objectionable where many of higher pretensions might be considered so.

But here I detect myself unconsciously flourishing its excellencies, and tooting its eulogy in a negative way, and that very positively; and imagining I hear a voice from some one crying "Avast there!" I will just "haul up" and let you discover, gentle reader, for yourself what more I might have to say in this line. Yet as you will not very likely be able to find out, unless I tell you, that I compiled this book without having any notes—all my papers, including a diary of the voyage, having been destroyed in a storm when we were homeward bound—allow me to state this much, by way of excuse for what defects you may observe; as also, that owing to almost entire blindness, I am quite unfitted to the task of mechanical writing, comparing of notes, assortment of papers, all inseparably involved in the getting out of a work of this nature unless with aid from an amenuensis and colaborator, who, timeously for me, turned up in the person of an old comrade, to whom the services exacted have been purely *labor amoris*, both of us bravely holding ourselves uninterdicted by the imperative warning

set forth in the imprecative dictum of that sublime and far-seeing genius, "the man of Uz:" "Oh that mine enemy would write a book."

Still loath in curtailing this never-to-be-slighted opportunity for puff, there is yet one thing more pressing for utterance that I would like to bring out before taking a back seat and letting the affair, standing on its own merits, speak for itself. It is that I have made endeavors in it as far as possible, to avoid technicality, with view toward all my readers having a fair chance to comprehend the meaning of the text.

With regard to the work apart from its merits or demerits intrinsically, and bearing upon the principles of its inception, there remains but a word to be said. It is true that the idea of writing a book came to me as a resort and expedient for turning over an honest dollar, to whom other avenues of advancement in the world are most peremptorily closed. By the direst of all afflictions that humanity can possibly have to groan under —deprivation of sight—I have been forced thus to turn within myself for the means of wresting from the world what it owes us all, a living, but which it will give us charily unless we use energy to procure it, like Jacob with the angel. As nothing that I could do seemed so available to this result, and as previous to my whaling, I had

been a printer, and familiar with the business of publishing, I thought of acting the part of a true American to whom nothing comes amiss, and furnishing to the world some recollections of my vanished activity in it, while yet the paths it disclosed were bright before me, and ere blindness had extinguished forever the light to one eye, and greatly obscured it to the other.

A previous experiment on a smaller and humbler scale, likewise gave me encouragement. In it I met no doubt much kind consideration which gave me its support on grounds distinct from deserts manifested in my writing, but I also encountered much hearty enconium which inspirited me to make another effort of the same kind. Both the press and individuals of good taste and acknowledged judgment in the community, accorded my first effort the approval which has breathed the breath of life into this second.

Now in placing these lucubrations before the public, I would only presume to express the sanguine hope which I cherish instead of lofty ambition, that, standing independent of the extraneous aid of the circumstances I have brought into notice, or of any other, it may prove somewhat entertaining, and not quite destitute of instruction; and that all who are induced to purchase a copy of this little production, may realize in its perusal an

equivalent for their investment. Likely they, in many cases may fail to glean from it any new fact or truth worthy to be deposited in the repertoire of their knowledge, but if they come across in it with what is refreshing to their memories of what they have previously learned, or find in it any old established information with new setting, or freshly furnished so as to afford some new degree of enjoyment, I shall have fulfilled an end I held in view from the first, and shall have the most gratifying boon that in doing, any man can desire for himself—the approval of conscience, and shall contemplate with complaisance the change effected in my *personel* from being an assistant whale-catcher in a Yankee schooner, to becoming a full-fledged author, with more than one work to look back upon, following my name into public notice if not into immortality, and with a liklihood to look forward too, from the mast-head as it were, of producing another ere long, detailing my adventures in quest of whales in the South Pacific.

Here I find myself naturally led to the concluding part of my preface, which is to tender to my friends my heartiest thanks for past favors showered upon me. At the same time I would inform all and sundry, that with the leisure I enjoy, and greater facilities as well as improved opportunities I possess for getting up the present volume,

while the scene is the identical one occupied by my former narration, and the concatenation of event the same, yet as the matter has been more fully searched out, and differently presented, having quite a new dress given it, so as to have good solid pretensions to originality—except where quotation marks are placed—I may boldly lay claim for this little volume that it is no supplement to any thing of the kind ever produced by myself or any one else, but is an entirely disjoined and separate issue—not by this, pledging myself to any thing for the future, that would militate against *it* having a supplement or successor when the time may come, as already hinted. JOSEPH P. FAULKNER.

Bath, Steuben Co., N. Y., 1877.

INTRODUCTION.

Though I consider it unadvisable to enter upon any minute detail of my early life—as if apart from the extraordinary experience I have undertaken to relate, the subject could possibly be recognized as of any general interest—I incline to think a brief sketch of my life previous to my becoming a whaler, just enough to gratify the natural piquant curiosity of a kindly interested reader, would be not only no irrelevance, but in fact would be filling a blank that otherwise many would perceive. Hence so as to have such in place, orderly set forth, instead of being marked somewhat out of it, as an appendix to the work, I rather anticipate the imagined want by here preffixing a brief account of myself.

I was born in the town of Bath, Steuben county, New York, a little more than thirty years ago—my memory not reaching so far as to be able to fix the date with nicety. After the usual course of boyhood in that charming little place, in which several narrow escapes from drowning, and some

hair-breadth escapes from sound thrashings, were pleasantly diversified with several of the latter named subjective exercises from which no way of escape turned up, and from which I imbibed my first crude notions of "*whaling*," I made up my mind consonant with my natural guardian, that in the precincts of the school I had learned about as much as was ever likely to do me good, as well as a good deal that might with advantage be unlearned. So about the age of fifteen years I was set to learn a trade, by being duly installed as printer's devil in an office established in my native place. For the period of three years I steadily followed this business, and gradualy acquired such facility in the art of a "*typo*" as entitled me to be considered quite an adept, notwithstanding at times knocking quantities of labor into "*pi*" in unworkmanlike style.

My wages had risen steadily until from a boy's they made approximation to those of a man, and in person I had grown along with them till attaining my present gigantic stature of five feet four inches in my boots. I was fast settling down into a manhood of steady habits, of industry and of temperance. Every promise of good citizenship budded and bade fair to blossom in my career, when my first grand misfortune befel, bringing with it a sequel of blight to these in their modest

civic aspect, tho' giving them an opportunity for effloresence, seldom it is to be hoped, again occurring in our country's history, when they at once flowered in other forms than those promised.

Our office occupied the third story of a building, and its rear had a back door to it which was unsupplied with verandah or stairway. We used it chiefly for hauling in, by pully, stuff required more ponderous or bulky than could conveniently be brought up in any other way. It was likewise generally kept open for purposes of air-draft in the summer time or when the weather was genial. It was wide open as I stood one day in the summer, right by it, stooping over the curb-stone at work with my back turned toward it. Suddenly I raised myself from a bending posture meaning to assume an erect one. From, I suppose, a slight rush of blood to the head, which is often incurred by one so employed or situated, or from sheer carelessness, forgetting for the instant where I was standing, I somehow, then and there made my exit from the building, and by very rapid locomotion. Before being fully aware of the magnitude of the feat I was performing—due notice of which beforehand would doubtless have drawn a crowd similar to some of the famous Sam Patch's or the still more renowned Blondin's—I had passed a distance of over thirty feet through unsubstantial air, and

arrived on *terra firma* with a fractured leg and arm—both right ones—besides external bruises, and internal contusions which luckily proved of slighter consequence.

By careful nursing and good surgical aid, after the lapse of a few months I was able to be again up and about; but had not resumed my place at the "*case*" when the military fever occasioned by the rebellion came to a crisis in my neighborhood. Almost all my old chums were enlisting. Seized with the ailment, as it then showed itself like a contagious disease among the patriots, I too resolved to don the suit of blue and to go for a soldier. And as soon as sufficiently whole I volunteered, passed the surgical examination necessary and became enrolled as "food for powder," and one of my country's "stays in day and hour of danger" in the 107th Regiment N. Y. S. V. This was on the 15th day of August 1862. I had afterward, I found, occasion to remember the date, although at the time it did not appear to me as particularly deserving of my attention, or as having any great claim upon recollection.

Our regiment was quickly raised and at once took the field; and we saw a good deal of service before quitting it, being present and having an hand in many hard battles and tough minor engagements, besides doing some tall marching through

old Virginia clay, as elsewhere. In May, 1864, I received a severe wound from a rebel bullet in the hip, temporarily incapacitating me from pursuing the fortunes of my regiment. I had to go to hospital with it, and after a protracted siege of some months' duration so far recovered as to be able to rejoin my comrades in the field, where I remained, with more or less inconvenience from it, and without having received any more *douceurs* from the foe until the termination of hostilities. Then being disbanded as a regiment, we all got honorable discharges, which secured for us warm welcomes from the dear ladies, who feasted us on our return, both with their smiles and their more material blessings. Can I ever forget that time? Never! But it passed, and so have many of our number since.

My wound proved to be not so easily cured as cicatrized. It frequently since has broken out anew, and was an indirect cause to which my loss of vision is to be attributed; for, obliged by it to repair to a Chilian hospital when sailing in the South seas, I there caught the small-pox, and from that it came about that I lost one eye, and by sympathy almost the other, seeing now with one eye dimly as if looking through a cake of snow. For this wound I am in receipt of a Government pension, but small and quite inadequate

for support, and only intended to cover the partial loss of power by the slight hurt.

After the war was over I resumed my occupation as a compositor, so long relinquished, in my native town, and for a time managed to plow quietly along, and apparently very patiently, in the old rut. But a lust for adventure had now been enkindled and a desire for roving had been awakened within me, which could not be smothered or lulled to sleep. Excitement had been, for so long, a tree under whose shadow I had been accustomed to stretch my faculties, that after a brief time of repose I was perfectly unable to check a desire to camp again beneath it, or resist the temptation of plucking its fruit, even if I had to make great leaps to reach it, or was compelled to wander in far distant prospects after it. As I strolled through the dull inane avenues of my half rustic home siren voices seemed calling me far thence. As I pursued the humdrum of my business visions of vagabond enjoyment seemed beckoning me away into foreign lands and into unwonted occupations. By day reverie threw a cloud before my fancies on which their delights were depicted; by night dreams lit up panoramas where they were all but realized. Then I *determined* "to see the world."

With this end in view I resigned my situation

at home to occupy one of a similar character in the oil regions of Pennsylvania. Thence after a while, I departed for the great cities of the East; and New York, and Boston, with their suburban excrescences became by times my places of residence, working in them as a journeyman printer. But the life, though agreeable as one in which a taste for travel could be indulged, was too tame. It palled upon my spice-loving palate. I had not what I longed for of excitement and novelty; and to procure these grand desiderata I at last exchanged my position as a "poor but honest" printer in "an alley" for that of a jolly tar before the mast—my quiet life as a compositor for one "on the ocean wave." Away I prepared to hie from the little New England port of New London, for Greenland, or the North Pole, in a hunt after whales, or any more stirring game that might turn up.

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CHAPTER I.

THE START.

Clear and exhilirating was the air, blue and speckless the sky, calm and glassy the water, amid and on which joy seemed bounding before us, as one morning early in May, 186–, I chimed in my best pulmonic efforts with the stentorian chorus rendered by the throng heaving anchor on board the schooner "F——," of New London, Connecticut, as she left that port for an eighteen months' or two years' cruise—as the case might prove itself—to the western coast of Greenland after a cargo of whale-oil and whalebone.

I shipped on her as an hand before the mast with an allowance such as is usual in most vessels, or all making long voyages, in the shape of an advance for outfit, etc., the same to be deducted from my share of the profits—if any—when the vessel returned to port. This is the way whalers are run—the owners first securing what they agree in considering good dividends for the capital invested, and dividing, at unequal rates, the

surplus of gain between themselves and the men, first however, deducting from the shares of the latter the price of the outfits and other extra incidental expenses after incurred, and merely paying over the balance thus produced.

The "F——" was a small craft, one of the least employed in that line. She was, however, a good sailer, fitted out pretty compactly; was tight, and sound in her timbers, having an heavy iron-plated prow and hull as armor defensive and offensive against the ice, and was of one hundred and ten tons burden, with a carrying capacity of six hundred barrels. Her ship's company was eighteen all told, consisting of captain, first and second mates, cooper, blacksmith, steward, two boat-steerers, cook, and eleven 'fore-mast hands. There were plenty of stores on board, and all of prime quality, and those were served out in no penurious spirit.

As we passed Block Island at the entrance of the sound, and I could feel the gentle south breeze that fanned us on our way, I, unconsciously almost, took longer breaths of it, while luxurating in the deliciously novel sensations of a landsman making his first acquaintance with boundless Ocean, so impressive of infinitude, that strange unattainable idea, at the borders of which the soul of man so loves to hover. Then, as I

walked the boards of our little craft, or in new-found agility sprung aloft in her rigging, I must confess that I did have some swelling thoughts about being "every inch a sailor," trouble me a trifle. To and fro I flitted with a jaunty air and elastic step that were a little flattened when the second night out a severe gale swept down upon us. Then having to climb aloft stowing sail, when the utmost I could do was to save myself from being blown overboard, was my first acclimation to the arduousness of the life. The seas, by the force of the wind, rapidly ran till they swept over the deck and made it untenable except by holding on to something firmly fixed. I managed to get around in it all, and never was the least sea-sick, though I saw several who were, and among them a few who had been several voyages. Those speedily changed their deportment as they fell ill. I observed them no longer bold sailors—nor even in their own estimation become any thing more than the direst wrecks of humanity, as with woe-begone faces and dejected mein they crept about their duties, or utterly prostrated, laid themselves out "to die."

The fearful nausea of sea-sickness is accompanied with a deadly pallor of the countenance, and the eye appears dull and sunken, closing as if done with things below or wishing no more to

look at any thing. Then indeed the sufferer can exclaim in the words of Hamlet: "Man delights not me, nor woman either," as with outstretched neck even like a swan's, he gazes tearfully into mysterious depths over the bulwarks after something thither sent by involuntary action—a breakfast or dinner mayhap. Finally, when all this terrible sensation has been prolonged, and this gazing business re-enacted indefinitely, the poor wretch is seen to sink in agony and in despair into a corner, amid the spare tackle, if not routed from it to go to where he has most objections, amid a close atmosphere to his berth. As I assisted one of these below I could not help inquiring how he felt, thus imposing upon him the unneeded sorrow of telling his plight, and shall never forget the look he cast upon his interrogator. Its close resemblance to that which a departing duck is credibly said to assume in a violent thunder-storm, came home to me at once, as he accompanied the look with groans instead of words selected for the purpose of description, but they were groans well calculated to fill the hiatus of language, and to draw sympathy from the most callous.

Sailors, it is rightly maintained, are nowise deficient in qualities of tenderness. Though their hands be horny with labor, and calcined by the friction of ropes, they have still soft touches in

them when occasion requires. If any serious trouble affects a shipmate, Jack is on hand with a woman's care, though scarcely with her fine instincts of attention. But to his notion sea-sickness is not a straightforward ailment at all. It is but a sham illness at best, in which there is no body of trouble; and no matter what the sufferings of the subject may be, they are matter for legitimate joking with him. He regards it as a passing cloud merely, and in anticipating the time when its shade and detrusion will have cleared away, he will laugh at it, sometimes even in its victim's face; which is all very wrong of course in Jack to do, for I can assure my readers, many or most of whom have had no opportunity of judging for themselves, that from close observation I have concluded it is no fit act—to cachinnate over any one suffering from it. But is there not many more as well as Jack, who display an heartlessness toward suffering when no danger or serious consequences are apprehended? Yes! Jack is not alone in this respect. What tender-hearted creature among them all, for instance, vouchsafes the demanded amount of condolence to a person suffering from tooth-ache? Don't tell me! I have seen the most amiable of beings, while hypocritically tendering compassion to me by the breastful, when my tortured jaws

were causing me to hop, "kicking the big stools o'er the little," just making fun in a side play to one of her own sex who had likewise been helping to comfort.

After the swell occasioned by the gale had subsided, which was not fully till the fourth day out, our invalids began to show game again, and at the mess-table some of them to make bravely up for late short-goings. A slight relapse took one of them at sight of a lump of salt pork I inadvertantly held before him. This caused the upsetting of my coffee, as in the hurry of his departure my improvised table, which stood in his way of ascent to the ship's side, was swept of its contents. At length all of us became able to look nature once more squarely in the eye without turning pale. Yet there was not much after all to be observed in that eye, except, indeed, at sunset or at sunrise, when the man must be blind who could turn his face to the gorgeous pictures she then exhibited fastened in the clouds, without marvel and admiration beyond what words can convey.

Since quitting port we had made an average of six knots an hour. As we advanced, and had now reached the Southern shores of Newfoundland, the temperature very perceptibly became colder, though the wind was continuously from a

southern quarter. Several times we were out of sight of land, but often we skirted it some miles off the larboard, and we thought that the American coast generally, is not, so far as seen by us, distinguished for grandeur. To one coming from less favored lands, I should think, and one who had worked himself up to a point where he might readily go into ecstasy over the first sight of it he beheld, the low-lying, unpretentious beach would be quite a disappointment, and the air of liberty he would sniff from it while looking for a spot fit for the erie of the bird of freedom, would likely somewhat fail, in consequence, to inspire his conceptions. But the fleet of fishing vessels we were constantly passing, together with steamers and merchantmen, which crowd this part of the high-seas, would not, in like manner, fall short in bespeaking to such an one the internal greatness and sublimity of our country, and of those institutions of hers which are the admiration, the consolation, and the envy of mankind.

Still onward and onward sped our gallant little ship, the ripple at her bows constantly babbling of the speed she was making, till off the banks the wind that had propelled her died out, the heavy mist enwrapped her as with a shroud, the waves lazily heaved her upon their bosom as if performing a motion of rest, and

> "Day after day, day after day,
> With neither breath nor motion,
> As idly as a painted ship
> Upon a painted ocean"

she lay, a horn blown at her prow constantly regaling our ears with its music, warning shipping of all kinds from a collision. Then in about a week a landward breeze sent us once more upon our way, rejoicing as we saw again through the fog the sun shine forth, and the stars and moon keeping their nightly vigils.

Our crew was divided into two watches, termed respectively the "starboard" watch, and the "larboard" or "port" watch. They relieved each other every four hours, one coming on deck as the other went below—one set doing duty while the others rested or employed themselves in such work as they individually chose—except when the cry: "All hands on deck," resounded, when slumber or aught else was tossed hastily to one side, and then those whose turn it might have been to rest, wrought at hauling, reefing, or making sail, or at whatever else of immediate need there was, until the pressure was over; but so employed or not, by the sound of the bell regularly struck all knew when their watch was supposed to be on or off.

In the course of a few days the novelty of the situation wears off, even to the very "*greenest*" on board, and I think when I first stepped upon a

plank of the vessel, I, among them all, had the best right to the sobriquet, or of being called so. Born further from the sea, and heretofore with the exception of a short year or so living further from it than any of the rest of the crew, a ferry-boat was the only vehicle of marine locomotion I had ever before entered, save that once I made the trip in a small steamer from New York to Coney-Island. Now, as I was proof against sea-sickness, and had shown that I had my sea-legs on, some of them were for regarding me as an "old salt;" and this character I could well enough have maintained only for my lamentable ignorance of every thing about a ship, which I could not keep under hatches. It was always appearing on deck whether I would or no. Why, I could not tell at sea the difference between a Yankee sloop and a full rigged barque, nor between a steamer and a light-house; but I picked up, and soon showed improvement, so that when one of the men to break the monotony tried to palm off a rock on the horizon upon me for a whale, I detected the imposture and indignantly resented the unwarranted liberty by telling him "he was blowing like one."

Something it may be here appropriate for me to say about the regulations which prevailed on board, and the treatment we were there subjected to, as much has been said and written upon this

topic generally. As I am now writing only my own experience, and not looking for evidence outside of that, I can but say as to it, that the dog's life Jack is most commonly reported as having to lead at sea, and the brutal tyranny to which he is said there to be exposed—true or false in the main as it may be—were not realized by me, especially in the instance under review. I do not mean to assert that I have never, during the period in which I frequented sea, come across bull-dog, overbearing officers, but what I do mean to asseverate and repeat, is, that I never saw them, however disagreeable, become the Neroes—the cold-blooded villains, they have been reported as being, delighting in the torture they are able to apply to their crews, and stopping at little or nothing which would promise gratification to their lust of cruelty. Nothing of this stamp could in the least be predicated of our officers.

Our captain was a young man—under thirty years of age I judged—who bore the character of a gentleman as much as any one whom I ever encountered in his walk of life, and aside from polish, as much so as I ever met in any other. Nothwithstanding, in giving emphasis to his mandates, he was sometimes accustomed to use a vocabulary not spoken by the refined or fastidious; and when his passion was up he was in the habit

of heaping epithets of rather a purple hue or plutonic twang on the heads of offenders. He was a man of rough energy but of sterling quality, and never failed to execute his threats when incurred; "a regular sea-dog" of the St. Bernard species. Any dereliction from duty coming under his notice was surely served by him with its due modicum of punishment. And I never knew him to abuse much his great power on board, which is absolute; for he always appeared to me in the light of one keeping the same kind of rein on himself that he did on others.

I am now reminded by these remarks of an occurrence of the passage out, illustrative of these peculiarities, and confirming to a great extent the character I give him; as if the offense I shall relate had been committed against some depraved fellow having his power, the offender would never have come back alive from Greenland, which he did, hearty and well.

A man whose "trick" it was at the helm incurred the captain's anger by allowing the vessel to deviate two points from the course he had been instructed to steer. Jack was peremptorily challenged for his error and mismanagement, and well blown up too boot. He replied pertly and saucily. The captain not wishing to have an incident of this kind pass without bearing at its heels what

he regarded as its due meed, presented his interlocutor with his compliments in the ready shape of a No. 9 boot; and with this satisfaction taken, ended the matter, as he reckoned. Not so Jack, however. He felt the insult, and being of a very unforgiving disposition, especially, like many people, when he imagined he saw a way to exercise it, he determined to have revenge. A few days after, having been sent aloft with a bucket of tar to use on some part of the rigging, and watching his opportunity, he let it slip as if by accident, bottom upward, just as the captain came plumb beneath him. The contents of course covered our redoubtable commander from head to foot, making him cut a sorry figure indeed, before us all, who could not suppress laughter. No sooner that he got the tar from his eyes and mouth though, than it became his turn. Observing the quiet elation and very visible cunning of the author of his mishap, he ordered him at once "a dose of keel-hauling." This punishment consisted in being made fast to a rope, it being passed under the arms and looped on the breast, then in this "fix" thrown overboard to be dragged for some time after the vessel, the face cutting the waves and coming up to the surface so as to make breathing admissable in gasps. The delinquent accordingly got a first-class sousing in

pretty cool water. It is needless to remark that this prescription had all the complicated effect aimed at—that of lowering his elation, out-generalling his cunning, and finally, calming his boisterous feelings of revenge, the same so dear to the savage breast.

Occurrences like that recited were very rare among us, for the men knew well enough when they had a good captain, and gave him little occasion for exercising the hand of rigor. Where every man had his part, and when the duty assigned to it was clearly defined and known exactly, there was scarcely a chance offered for serious misunderstanding on that score. If a man knowing what is expected from him, and contented that it is not too much, does it quietly and correctly, I have always noted that good officers will not exact any more, will be careful in taxing their men, and that a good understanding cannot but prevail all round. This was the case with us.

Our first mate was a down-easter, partly owner, a man of considerable natural generosity very becoming to his profession which was ordinarily concealed beneath a husk of roughness. Free cursing seemed to be his safety-valve, giving vent to ill-nature that might otherwise rankle and injure his fine physique, and it seldom appeared in any other way. If a man was sick, he was

sharp to notice his symptoms, and quick to bestow upon him whatever he had conducive to comfort and recovery; but woe to the unhappy wretch whom his lynx eye once detected feigning that condition so as to get off work. He did not care about trying the little game more than once.

Our first mate was always ready to bear a hand himself too, at whatever demanded a united pull, and preferred settling his differences on the spot to having them lugged before an higher tribunal Apropos of this, I recollect of a sound whipping he gave to one of the men one morning, who had shown himself a little recalcitrant and insolent. Taking off his coat and peeling up his shirt-sleeves, he went in, coming out with a black eye, but with increased respect from all hands; for a sailor respects equally pluck, vigor and independence—in others as in himself.

Our second mate did not amount to much in any body's estimation but his own. Of a narrow, self-conceited mind, that even knowledge of facts only seemed to densify, his self-esteem alone was above reach, but even that I have reason to suspect fell considerably before he got quit of us. His positition on board was of slight importance, and taking everything into consideration, of still slighter. He evidently had mistaken his profession in trying to adopt that of a sailor. A sheriff-

officer in a country town, or a turnkey in a prison he might have made. Before winter he left us, returning in a steamer that came out to us, to look after some such billet; and when he left us we all thought it was the "rightest" thing he did out there, the men who helped his things on board never heaving a single sigh or giving a wistful look after him.

The crew were rather a jovial set, with a joke and a laugh for everything. Did a fellow's box become unlashed, and in a lurch of the vessel get heaved atop of him, almost breaking his leg and spilling his coffee, a general roar ensued, and some such remark was echoed as "Mate, it's lucky that chest was not full of gold now!" or "I say, 'mate,' you're flinging about like a land-bird at sea in a gale!" and the whole forcastle would join in at the signal thus given with crackling laughter or with merry jest. Did a fellow's hand get badly jammed, or hurt in any way, jokes upon his handiness became rife, and if it was hurt so badly that the member could not be used, it was called "a hospital patient," and he "the most off-handed fellow on board." And so on the thing went with them, always a little sunshine in the darkest weather, always a laugh on the hardest plank. The older sailors were those I found the most attractive in many ways—chiefly, I suppose,

from their more pure, simple-heartiness, and their more complete segregation from the ways of other men. One or two there were, with whom I closely associated on other grounds, young men of some character and acquirements. On the whole, a better lot of mess-mates I could not have obtained, nor desired to obtain. Each and all had individuality largely developed, which, the longer I staid among them, seemed to me the more conspicuous and interesting. How happy I would be to etch some of them, if I thought I could do them justice. But I fear I have no room for a portrait-gallery here. Suffice it then to say, that they were fair types of their class. I shall ever remember them; and with warm feelings recall their faces, voices, habits, sayings and doings to my recollection, in scenes and at times when reveries are most in place.

It is astonishing with what celerity acquaintance, and in some cases friendships mature within "wooden walls." These are like unto hothouses for plants, causing icicles pendant from the boughs of human nature to drop off, and blossom and fruit to come out instead. We all got very well posted about each other, and I was as familiar with the peculiarities of each of my shipmates as if we had been for years together, whereas only yesterday, as it were, I was an entire

stranger among them, and they were generally strangers to one another. But we had been day and night together now for some time, and during that period had been in a rough, practical sense "all the world to one another," without reference to any "Annie Laurie." We had seen rough and smooth weather together too, and thus had another way of finding each other out, than that usually accorded in such brief time. Each knew what the other was made of in foul weather as well as in fair, and this makes quite a difference too, in some men. Some first-rate fair-weather companions cannot be at all depended upon when foul weather shows itself. With the appearance of the first premonition of a change—a cloud no bigger than a man's hand in the horizon, maybe—some alteration may in them be noted correspondingly; and when the whole heavens over our heads are darkened, they are nowhere. Give me the man that manifests no token of emotion on account of brewing skies, and who will not budge any because a storm is breaking overhead.

I had had by this time a test of sea-life in a varied sense. I knew and appreciated smooth sailing, but I had also known and encountered churlish sailing. I had done duty by night as well as by day, and had been aloft at all times, as well as, when it came my turn, held the wheel on deck. I

had, moreover, had my experience of a forecastle when all was going on smoothly, and the "watch below" were gathered for amusement, some smoking, while others spun yarns or sang.

There was one little fellow from Brooklyn, N. Y., who used at such times to be always ready with a good story; and there was a song which particularly took my fancy, that he often gave us, called "THE HELMSMAN." Its intrinsic merits, as I perceive them, the associations its perusal or repetition ever awakens in me, along with the recollection particularly of the first impression it made in my mind—all comprise to secure a predilection in me to it; and if I now reproduce it here without the fit accompaniment of sound, which adds so much to its charms, it is not without hoping that my readers may find pleasure in its perusal.

I think, my friend, who was a young man of some reading, told me he had culled it from Harper's Magazine, but will not be sure. Here it is anyhow:

THE HELMSMAN.

Dark is the night nd high the wind:
The sky with flying clouds is lined;
Our good ship scuds before the gale
All taut and trim with shortened sail.

Against her sides the black waves dash,
Her timbers shiver with the splash;
And skyward from her sharp-peaked prow
The foam flies light, or sweeps her bow.

Ahead the view is thick and dark,
Yet onward bounds our eager bark
While loud hoarse tumult in the wind
Forbids her e'er to look behind.

Beside the wheel the steersman stands,
He grasps it with his brawny hands
And all the while his restless eye
Roams over ship, and sea, and sky.

His face is grim, his shadowy form
Is buttoned close against the storm,
His tawny hair streams out behind,
His beard is handled by the wind.

Oh seems he now a phantom there,
Beside the wheel—a thing of air;
And seems the ship some ghostly bark
Thus rushing blindly through the dark!

Oh hark! what means that sudden sound?
Oh helmsman whither are we bound?
No sign makes he; nor speaks a word,
Nor can by eye nor ear be stirred,

But, straight before the hissing gale,
All trim and taut with shortened sail,
Like some wild sea-bird in her flight,
Our gallant ship darts through the night.

Oh helmsman whither sail we now?
What land is stretched before our prow?
What port shall we attain, say you?
What friendly harbor sail we too?

He answers not but silent stands
And grasps the wheel with both his hands,
And not a look but in the air,
As if no one were standing there.

And onward, onward through the dark,
Like some wild sea-bird speeds our bark;
The lashing waters at her prow,
Alone to cool her phrensy's glow,

CHAPTER II.

BOWLING ALONG—ICEBERGS, &C.

We were now, by our reckonings, off the coast of Labrador, on which bleak country the genius of Campbell has, confirming nature in the act, stamped the most chillingly repulsive to the sympathies of all words—"*inhospitable.*" A glimpse of it greeted us, or to be consistent with the remark just made, we, it, as we glanced over the taffrail, bearing away eastward toward Cape Farewell, the southernmost part of Greenland. This was the last sight of the American continent we were destined to have for some time. We were then the twenty-eighth day out, in latitude 50° north; and the air was getting quite cool.

So far, with exception of the gale encountered in the sound, after we left port, our voyage had been very delightful. All things considered it had been undertaken in the right time, for the waters we were now traversing; and it seemed to me more in the delectable light of a pleasure trip, as was the idea I started with, than of a commercial enterprise of which I was but a factor unit. A generally

favorable breeze had so far pushed us forward. No sail was visible anywhere within our horizon, and when we lost one brief and shadowy view of Labrador—the only sight of land we had, except once, that of Newfoundland, since leaving to distance espial of our own country—we bade farewell, not only to the great American continent, but to any more communication with, or observation of our fellow-man outside our ship's bulwarks, until meeting him on the shores of Greenland.

Now let me *en passant* remark that of all different kinds of vessels afloat, whether classified on account of their size, rigging, or business engaged in, whalers are the most privileged with respect to their complement of hands—always of course bating a man-o'-war. Twice as many hands as would be thought efficient for the same sized vessel in the merchant service, and more too, is thought necessary in manning a whaler. As a consequence, in ordinary sailing there is less pressure for duty in one of them. There "*All hands ahoy!*" does not bring on deck the sick or disabled to haul, unfurl or reef with the strongest and most agile, when the slightest slip by weakness, or the least lack of tactile power may precipitate into a wide and fathomless maw to which there is no disgorge, and only the cry of "*man overboard!*" without eliciting succor, or even an attempt to save, as it

is echoed shrilly amid the turmoil, goes up from powerless man as a protest against iron fate. The chief reason to be assigned for this repletion of help is in the precarious nature of the employment which requires a reserve for contingencies, as also a relay necessary for operations when "*filling up*" once begins.

Yet whatever may be the amelioration or amenities of the situation, to say the best of it, a long voyage to sea is a most monotonous piece of business. One day can hardly be marked from another by any distinctive feature, and the time passes very wearily without newspapers, or news concerning those you are always thinking of. Especially may this state be claimed as so with a "greenhorn," so the term is. He is sufficiently in a maze by his novel surroundings, but they are not wide enough to prohibit him from taking them all in shortly, and trying to peer out from them he is as much at loss as a caged bird just taken from liberty and the wild wood.

To be sure where the Sabbath is kept, there a landmark is set up which affords a means of distinguishing the week, thence its days separately. But where there are no services on that day, all other days of the week, or even of the month, are apt to run into somewhat of a blur with all whose

business is not with the log, that being the prerogative of the officers. Keeping a diary would obviate this confusion greatly, it might be supposed, but who on board ship, among the hands, can secure to himself the immunities which would be demanded in order to a regular record being made?

So, an unsophisticated landsman might suppose, as he observed the importance some trivial affair or event draws to itself on board ship, that amid the paucity of occurrence, circumstances and their coadjutors have undue magnitude awarded them. This however is only half true. Inanity may be moved by a straw sometimes, but it hardly notices the texture or complexion of the straw that tickles it. When mind is restricted in subjects for study, it only studies the few before it more profoundly. There is nothing in itself silly, no more than there is in itself any thing impure. To wisdom, all things have lessons of importance, as "to the pure, all things are pure."

To the seaman, cut off from many diverting observations, some of those things which a landsman would be apt to overlook, are fraught with importance and possess enlarged significance. The appearance of the sky, for instance. No landsman is so accustomed as he to its changes, foretelling from them phenomena to be shortly manifest. The small cloud in the horizon, the

strata of cumuli piling up like the stair-way to Heaven's eternal throne, the fleecy bank of drifting mist, like cushions for cherubims to recline on, the small rift in the densely black canopy, like a cave in some rough mountain-side, all, all to him are pregnant with occult knowledge. Calm notice and reflection have whispered secrets of Nature into his ear, as with eye of keen intelligence he has scanned the parcels in which they were wrapt up. These secrets are to him no fanciful data neither. They are to him well worth obtaining at some sacrifice, at the expense of much grave cogitation, for they afford him means to avert calamity, or to soften its hard indentures. And while to the uninitiated, his knowledge of coming changes in elemental conditions is almost prophetic, they are liable to dwarf in estimation the crude means he employs for its acquirement.

No doubt, too, but what a trifling occurrence may be magnified on ship-board. But again, is it not difficult to pronounce upon what is trifling? The flight of birds is observed with an interest by the mariner far surpassing what is attached to the same incident on land. Nor is this without a frequent transcendental import to him likewise. His inner nature has something to do with leading his attention here, though. With a curiosity, and an affection tender and warm in its movings, he will

regard some feathered waif of a known or unknown species, as it has strayed from its wonted haunts, till it has, far out at sea, perched upon the spars or rigging of his vessel, or fallen flat or exhausted, and with the last efforts of exhaustion, upon her deck. Mayhap swept by the wing of the storm from its snug build in the hollow of a tree uprooted by the same blast, or maybe bewildered as night fell while it was trying hard to escape an enemy pursuing, it may have become lost at sea, striving in the wrong direction to reach land. With what compassionate eye of almost woman-tenderness he will see it wearily resting upon some part of the vessel; or, fairly worn with effort to alight upon the ark of safety it so lately discovered, how it will quietly, fearfully, trustingly, permit itself to be caught in his rough horny hands, crouching before that soft-hearted *monster* which to it he may appear. Then, what subject of conjecture it has become! Whence has it come? How long has it been upon the wing? What food does it go after? Where does it build its nest? Then, how betimes some amateur ornithologist—some "sir oracle"—of wider exploration than the rest, is called for and appealed to! All are huddled round for the investigation. The form, the beak, the plumage, the foot, the wing, is each inspected, and the natural history of the wanderer guessed

at, or authoratatively pronounced. The result known, the question settled and the little visitor is kindly entertained; perhaps to be kept as a pet, perhaps to be set loose when land is sighted.

Other than kind treatment to one of them it is neither in Jack's nature, nor yet in his power, to tender. Has not superstition backed humanity in addresses to him on the subject? What, for example, happened to the man who shot

> "The Albatrose, who day and night
> Came to the mariner's hollo?".

Did he not go into the silent sea with it alone, and it strung all the time about his neck until he learned to bless

> "The slimy things that crawled
> Upon a slimy deep?"

And does not Jack know a hundred and one cases just like that one so terrible, for killing or injuring the poor birds who in their direst necessity seek his help?

The appearance of birds, whose habits were recognized, either by the conformation they exhibited, or from previous acquaintance with them, has often led to important issues in the history of marine service. Confirmation of this cannot be found greater than in the history of the discovery of America. So this also is one of those trivial matters which at sea engross attention in

apparent disproportion. It is frequently thus of the biggest importance, however.

Again what excitement is invariably wrought in a ship some time out, and perhaps sailing in a path not known as one of "highways of the seas" by the cry of the "look-out" as he startles all with "*Sail ho*," etc. Immediately the captain is seen stepping clear of obstructions, with glass in hand, and sweeping the quarter indicated till the object looked for is picked up, then directing his contracting, concentrating sight for long upon it. Every one, from him down to the cabin-boy, is then seen rushing to some point of vantage, casting eager gaze over the bulwarks and striving to pick up the stranger, who, from that instant until she has passed far astern, becomes a ready topic for discussion. And if we can approach within hailing distance, so as to establish a small traffic in news with her, and send some letters home by her, which in sailor phrase is called "gaming," then indeed the importance from the first freely yielded, is justified by the solid satisfaction begotten of it.

On such matters, as they futuitously transpire, conversation hinges at sea with freer swing than any ordinary theme such as the weather, or the crops, can command on land, save with those narrowly interested. Thus it will be perceived that

the truism of circumstances altering cases applies to sea-life with stunning force; and universally, that there is more demanded from the person seeing than from the object seen, in the way of deciding what is, or is not of importance.

Still the cold kept increasing, and with it our efforts to resist it by activity were stirred up. Exercise was essential for the sustenance of vital heat, and as we wrought, laughter, jest, song and story were pressed into service as auxiliaries; and effective ones, it must be admitted, they were. Now icebergs became visible in increasing numbers. A few we had noticed at a distance shortly after leaving port. A few had all along been observed by us. But now I counted as many as fifty at a time; for we were now about entering Davis' Straits, that grand high-road to the higher latitudes in this part of the world. It stands about the sixtieth parallel. Here became more observable detached portions of tabular ice, called floes, and jagged lumps with no particular designation, which beset us, barring our progress augmentively. As we proceeded these increased every way, but the icebergs were the grand feature to be discriminated. They seemed to me some way off, like the tops of mountains towering over a nigh land, or something like very heavy clouds fringing the horizon, massive and jagged. They were of

a dull grey when in the shade, but emitted when in a position where we could observe them struck by the light, a lively brilliance most diversified. They were here like Mother Carey's chickens for number, and for the familiar way in which they swam about. The danger attached to their proximity somewhat modified the admiration which their splendor was well calculated to inspire. The power of attraction large bodies in the water are found exerting upon each other is, I opine, akin to what is termed the law of gravitation, obtaining in widest space. Sailing among them on this account becomes hazardous, especially on a dark night, and for another connective reason, viz: as they constantly are undergoing organic change, and at any moment are liable to turn over, finding a new equilibrium, or to break off where a crack or fissure is found, consequently a proximity to them is at the risk of being suddenly demolished by their weighty fragments toppling down upon us, or of being drawn under by the suction of their descent. Hence to keep at a respectful distance, we fully felt to be obligatory upon us toward icebergs at sea, as at times I have felt it to be no less so upon me toward their prototypes on land. Have you not, dear reader, also, at oftener than odd times?

Some of those we now saw were perhaps two hundred feet high, but the majority could not be computed as at much more than half that height, rising precipitously into gigantic peaks, singly or in series. Seven-eighths of this whole bulk is submerged, giving the largest known, which is said to rise three hundred feet above the surface, a total height from its base of two thousand four hundred feet! This is truly a tremendous bulk, carrying an immense quantity of cold with it into warmer latitudes. As they move onward they create quite a commotion in the waters round them, as with their summits cleaving the sky, they with their bases scrape the bed of ocean, and melting, deposit in those hidden paths, the detritus of the land which they have borne with them from the spots of their nativity amid the glaciers, those rivers of frozen water which do not flow, but slowly glide back to ocean whence they take their rise in glimmering mists or impalpable vapors.

What a magnificent sight some of them presented, and how weak words are in giving any adequate description of their glories! One of them in particular I well recollect riveting my eye on, in rapt wonder and admiration. The picture it impressed is still to me a vivid, moving reality, upon a sort of *camera obscura* of my mind. I

should judge it to have been about from forty to fifty acres in area, and nearly two hundred feet high, perpendicularly almost.

It is not often that the imagination finds in the aerial regions, a facilely adaptable canvas, across the front of which it may flit at will "making the shifting clouds be what he please;" but then, more or less effort in the conceptive or devising artist is implied. It is seldom, indeed, in any circumstance, even that most favorable, that the faculties of man are so thoroughly captivated by any force as by

> "A light that never was on sea or shore
> A consecration—"

to see quite different from what *is* in a solid piece of matter, turning a round fact into "the baseless fabric of a dream." Yet was such, in the instance to which I refer, literally the case in my experience.

One of those dull, grey masses of congealed water floating about, a gigantic ice-berg, coming into position where the sunlight played upon it to my eyes, thus entranced me. While I gazed fixedly upon it, and it dazzled with its opaline brilliance, I could not but recognize in it a power beyond all displayed in art, or heretofore to me at all, to transmute and glorify—Nature thus not only far surpassing art, but suc-

cessfully coping with herself in other designs. How majestically it sailed along! not farther distant from us than a little over a quarter of a mile! What rich, warm tints were thrown over its translucent surface! I do not think that tropical color ever had finer efflorescence than what I then looked on in those chilly waters bordering the Arctic.

I observed it having a kind of rotary motion, just as if it were a mysterious life—some grand Boreal monster gathering up its strength for Titanic feat boding destruction to lesser existences —bracing itself by preparatory throes for the whelming of those whose temerity had led them into regions of earth guarded so effectually by a morose genius against intrusion of civilized man.

And again as mine eyes opened fuller upon it, and mine inner perception awoke, it appeared a vision of that celestial city pictured in the Apocalypse, every gate of which is a pearl, the walls of which, from the foundations up, are of jewels infinitely precious "jasper stone clear as crystal" amethyst, topaz and beryl; the streets whereof are "of gold like unto clear glass." There, too, I beheld the broad, alabaster steps commencing at the edge of the river, leading up to the unveiled, uncreated radiance, and forming the grand climactic scene of "The Pilgrim's Progress."

Yet again, it seemed to me a copy of an earthly view, but the most resplendently sublime ever presented in matter. It became, while my rapt gaze was upon it, a temple and a fortalice united by glaring arch and blazing light. Mount Moriah and Mount Zion stood revealed in their ancient splendor. There were massive fane crowning the kingly height, glistening dome, tapering spire! There were the noble facade, and the pillared portico, and the queenly flight of inviting steps outstretching to the feet of humble worshippers. While on the left of all stood tower and turret, and sculptured battlements—a noble fortress—the temple of Soloman! the citadel of David!—all, it seemed to my now ecstatic soul, set in the grandeur of the olden time when men's faith was a visible and an almost tangible fact, hedging them in to duty, and reverence and fear. What a spectacle! And all ablaze with prismatic hues—glory appearing to radiate from every polished pinnacle and from every curved buttress, as from oriflammes of an angelic host encamped about, and to scintilate from every hollow and crevice as if the gleam of their helmets or the flash of their spears.

Still this huge mass kept a-bobbing and a-bobbing backward and forward continuously, not unlike a restive steed kept in check by his masterly rider. At length, as if Atlas were suddenly dis-

burdening himself of his rather cumbrous load, and as if Chaos still held carnival in these latitudes, and that hills and mountains were pebbles in his hands, with one final heave, such as Sampson made when a palace crashed about his own head and those of his foes, it plunged forward into what it made a seething abyss, with a roar which seemed to call forth echoes even in that echoless region. Turning completely over, or upon one of its rhomboidal sides, this immense fabric gradually became settled to an extent, exhibiting quite another spectacle, yet still one bathed in ineffable beauty and splendor. Thus it goes, perchance, onward, onward, seeking yet warmer climes, and coming in contact with hotter currents, until it has melted away, and become so small that a porpoise can turn it with its fluke. Then it disappears among what were, except in some solitary recollection like my own, where it ever remains as the IS of what hath been.

Perhaps to the simple imaginations of some, or of others enriched by observation, this picture may be cavilled at as an exaggeration. It may, in some point be open to this charge, but if this be so, the fault is deeper than the consciousness of the writer can allow sounding to be taken. It is in fact, out of sight, entirely hidden within the secret springs of my own thoughts; for no word

has been put to the description that has not first passed the gate of my earnest convictions of truth. The above doom is not, however, to be understood as applying immediately to all icebergs, much less to all ice found in the region to which we approached, as if all were identical with glaciers. Many icebergs wander for long periods undiminished amid the currents of the sea, or among the numerous inlets of that part of the world during summer floating around, during winter stationary, and much of the ice there, is solid and enduring as rock itself. Indeed, as is shown in the primitive igneous formations of the world, all rock becomes molten, or is reducible to elemental inconsistence, perhaps, by the necessary adjuncts being applied of heat, or aught else. And in that quarter strata of ice are often found underlying and supporting places where even vegetation is spread and a cramped extent of agriculture is indulged in; and intermixed with shale, beneath the surface are found pebbles of ice as hard and not much more brittle than some kinds of stone.

But this is a digression, the consideration of icebergs has induced. We are now in the very region of them, and not of them alone, as has been remarked, but of slices, lumps, floes and fragments of ice of every variety, in form and size—this assertion reminding me, by the way,

of the reply of a boy in Scotland, to an American gentleman, who inquired of him if it always rained there—"Oh no!" answered the youth ingenuously, "it whiles snaws." So as a diversity here, instead of icebergs so much spoken of we had ice-floes, and ice in every variety to be thought of, except in ice-cream. Perhaps that is there too. Pollar cubs must be inquired of about this. Lumps of ice were as plentiful, close before us, as cabbage in a good-sized kitchen-garden, and, in clustered groups, they did look like gardens or cornfields. Steering through their mazes we soon found to be what it was—no easy task—similar, I thought, to praiseworthy exertions made by some votary of Terpsichore, waltzing through a crowded ball-room. Soon the icebergs became less numerous, yielding precedence to their lesser competitors, as heavy artillery is seen to hold back before the steady and compact advance of infantry. We felt more and more called on to be on our guard against calamity.

> "Danger in front of us, danger to right of us,
> Danger to left of us, came on apace,"

and commensurately the clear sea grew to be an object of anxious out-look for us. Yet our feeling of enterprize, our bounding hilarity that could skip with joy into the embrace of danger—was not at all daunted. In fact, our situation had a

relish all its own, that seemed whetted by the strange scenes and the biting cold atmosphere. It was fun, not of a wanton kind, but still fun, wild and fantastic, that stirred the sluggish blood in depths wherein its effervescing sparkle sinks, drowning prosy hum-drum, until it mantled the cheek and enkindled the eye, putting new vigor into every tendon, muscle and nerve. Our fare might have been rough, but our digestion made ample amends.

Soon all around the white-fretted and irregular surface of the floes, spread out till we found ourselves completely environed by them, and they were so closely conjoined that breaks extending along or through large masses could not readily be detected. So we piloted our way through them in channels or locks.

Looking one day, about this time, from the rigging, to which I had occasion to resort, not so much for self-gratification in the way of hailing the prospect, nor in getting material to write a book, of which I had not yet dreamed even, I well noted the display that met my glance. I had just completed the stowing of a stay-sail, and was standing on the fore-cross-trees, leaning against the shrouds. The mittens in which my hands were encased were hard-frozen, but my hands were beginning to feel red-hot, from the natural heat

coming from work. I stood there for some minutes in a half-swinging position, over the deck one moment, and the sea the next, as the little vessel was skimming along before a brisk breeze. Far as my eye could reach, I beheld a plain which shimmered and gleamed in the slanting rays of the sun now merely dipping for a brief interval beneath the horizon as if in apology for the little caloric he distributed to us, and whose light was not entirely absent during the twenty-four hours. I was then reminded of a view from one of our western prairies—from the summit of some artificial tumulus, such as is there found frequently. But the prairie had in many respects the advantage of being more like a sea. On the prairie a dead level is what is most observable There, where I stood, I could see spectral hills, which rose abruptly from the plain, relieving its monotony, and giving to it an appearance of being what it was most distant from. Dotting the surface without intermeddling with its general level, in one place opaque, in another dazzling, the icebergs were the grand deception that they always are. Ruffled silvery spots, there like some lonely tarn, yonder like some expansive lake, alone marked the presence of open water. And from one to another of these open spaces, threading the campaign, appeared striated passage-ways, resembling

broad rivers and meadow brooks, more than—from their tortuous courses, canals, as they might with propriety be considered—though natural, instead of artificial, as canals are generally understood as being. In these lay our vessel's course as we might choose, and we were then sailing through a long series of them. The wind at the time blew briskly, and there was some swell on, but to my eye a calm seemed presiding over the whole. The ice enveloping the water repressed commotion, having restraining influence also upon that uncovered—small in area. Yet devoid of demonstration as the scene was to the eye, it was not destitute of it to the ear. Sounds portentous enough rose over the splash of the water at our bows, and the whistling of the wind among the cordage. Deep rumbles, growlings prolonged like distant thunder among mountains, sharp detonations like the bursting at one's feet of fire-crackers on a Fourth of July morning, and of small arms in the hands of mischief-loving little patriots, or anon like the sudden report of cannon from a masked battery, played continuously upon our tympana, as the ice cracked or collided in small detachments, or in great phalanges, or in crushing weights, smashing, rending, toppling, heaving continuously. Then we were right in the heart of the entire drift. What I had so often read of, and had pict-

ured in the obscure eye of my mind, was here in substance before me. I could hardly realize that it was so, as I recalled my school-days, looking at it, till as I gazed and gazed upon the weird vision, and listened and listened to the voices of it as in a dream, a call to "pork and beans" brought me hastily away, satisfied that "this was thusly."

It is only from about the end of June till about the middle of September, that this limb of ocean is navigable. All the remainder of the year it is blocked. One huge conglomerate field of ice, then with uncertain exceptions, extends from shore to shore, from continent to continent, and if the latest account be correct, over that whole unexplored waste hitherto, sometimes, termed "the Open Polar Sea," where the Arctic furies are now supposed to have their bowling-green. About the latter part of June the position of the sun in the ecliptic having for some time been favorably established, the obdurate cold of this region has melted, thawed and dissolved itself into a dew sufficient to break up its monopoly for a while. The vast ice-field is minced up and its portions become subject to the caprice of winds and of currents, these manifesting vigor in removing the incumbrances as rapidly as possible from their late ground of anchorage. Then floes are born, which are the largest masses of floating ice known in area, as

icebergs are in height. These float away till they get broken up into small fragments and melt, which they can do without going so far to the south as icebergs who have the same end before them. Encountering compression in a narrow channel or in being swept by a confined current they are liable to form into what is known as pack-ice—in this capacity officiating in the development of the most latent dangers—furnishing "crags" and "promontories," and "reefs," round which it is with great risk and difficulty a vessel can wend her way. In the flanking abutments the ice then presents, a new front of obstruction is often shown where only destruction gapes. Retreat is then too generally cut off. The mass in constant motion closes, like a pair of pinchers upon the vessel, and in so doing jams and crushes. Lucky indeed the vessel who once fairly amid pack-ice ever escapes the pounding and grinding process of its crucibles.

Pack-ice is more abundant in some seasons than in others, and also abounds in some localities more than in others—the part of the season having too, something to do with it. We did not encounter so much of it, though the floes were numerous and extensive. I am inclined to think the particular course we adopted gave us considerable indemnity from the evil. When we came to a halt through the

thick massing of the floes we had not much danger to fear. It was often that, when with practised eyes an officer had surveyed the field and determined on a course, having immediately ahead incumbrances, we had to get out upon them, the vessel being made fast with ice-hooks, alongside. Then with axes and with saws we had to cut a canal a mile or two in length through a neck of ice into open water—shoving the cakes broken off under the edges. After which exercise, violently taken, and almost without cessation till the work was completed, repose awaited us merely in a change of drudgery while we towed her through, then trimmed sail, then did the something of the thousand and one things to be done on board ship at such times and in such a locality. When at length we had a chance to clamber into our bunks, sleep there waited for us without any coaxing. This process of cutting and hauling could only be resorted to when the wind was not high, and where the currents were apparently reliable, as in the event of either giving disturbance we might incur a "nip." Need I explain what this means? I have already made allusion to it. The word is expressive, but as the poet has said

"Ye gentlemen of England
Who live at home at ease,
Oh little do ye think upon
The dangers of the seas!"

I suppose some more explanation may be in place to many. Well, if such an event as this wee word "nip" defines, were happening to a vessel sailing in these seas, the fate of those sailing in her would be tantamont to that of being cast adrift at once in an open boat with at most a few weeks' provisions, till through almost interminable endurances, hazards and adventures, the poor wretches therein—if they could survive so much—could reach a port of safety, or land upon some desolate barren rock, to await the chances of a deliverer in some passing vessel which might or might not observe their distressful, entreating signals. The word might be otherwise practically interpreted to mean death in one tragic act.

A "nip" is a danger that the mariner of the seas, more or less pressingly, has to constantly look out for. It may come from two icebergs, which drawn and rushing forcibly together, envelope and enclose his frail tenement between their clashing sides. From this doom he is beyond escape when near enough to be within the sphere of their mutually attractive power to any extent. In such case no survivor to the awful denouement is left to tell the tale. Consequently there is no description extant of it, save that which is fanciful merely. The deepening roar, the paralyzing grandeur of the shock, with the prelude of its

mighty rush of waters, may be thought of by those who never experienced them; but how imperfectly the idea is present to the mind which the actual occurrence must at once bring out, as man and his works are about to shrink into utter ruin, like a pasteboard box and its contents before the stupendous presence of Nature's agents—their energy and onslaught!

A "nip" may likewise occur from the collision of an iceberg with a floe. Then the shock is not so violent, and it may happen that a port of temporary safety may be made in some of the rugged bights of the latter, ere the impending contact becomes fixed. To be sure, then ever destruction and fatal injury is imminent, but more chance there exists in which these may be arrested. In case of slight injury, that can be repaired; sailors being all adepts in building, mending, or caulking, as well as in pumping, especially when all such work has to be gone into for "dear life," and the prospect of seeing home once more. A ship-carpenter, too, is always on board these vessels to superintend operations, and to lend effective hand to them. And have they not all got wives, or sweet-hearts that some love even better than some wives; or fathers, or mothers, or children, whom they wish even now to clasp to their hearts. Aye! These are all comprised in the word "home."

How sweet it is to those whose life has little in it of sweetness. Ah! the potion poor Jack has to gulp down is often very bitter; but he swallows it, just thinking on the sweetness of that one word, "home." I do not think he could otherwise.

Lastly, a "nip" is when a vessel is attempting to pass between two floes—oft in a way leading to sure destruction. Slowly and surely these close like pack-ice—crunching up every intervening object, as a crocodile in one of the lagoons of Louisiana when it has got its living *dejeuner* between its jaws. Under this remorseless pressure, her sides in a brief time are stove in, as if an egg-shell, her massive timbers obtrude like bones from a badly shattered limb. There is just one way of escape open for her, ere the final catastrophe has supervened, and that depending on no volition of her crew, but upon the free grace of Nature herself, or rather of heavenly powers which work that effect we call "Nature." It is, if the floes are elastic enough—which depends on their not being too thick—they may slightly give way, the teeth of them may slide, in their grip, along the curvature of her hull, on one or either side, thus raising her between them clean out of the water, and aloft among the debris of the seam. Then if the junction does not prove permanent, and the lucky craft does not become unlucky by

being claimed as a trophy by the enemy, as sometimes happens, to be borne by him in triumph to the foot of the Ice King's throne, the voyage may be incontinently resumed with allowance of grog to all hands, and with meet feelings of thankfulness to an overruling Providence in the hearts and souls of some.

This last mentioned piece of good fortune happened to come our way once, a day after the immortal Fourth, which we kept up in poor style—that is, no style at all. We had been toiling as before mentioned, for a week previous—cutting through ice eight inches thick, and we had succeeded in our endeavors—having made a channel wide enough for transit of about a mile and an half in length. The way would be then clear to a stretch of open sea, where we expected to find less obstacles, and starting from it, less obstructed advance. Our schooner had entered the trough so prepared, and having a wind which we reckoned upon to carry us through, we had all got on board, and were watching with interest the progress making. Presently, ahead loud booming sounds were heard repeating, and interluded by continued loud crackling. The floes were gradually closing in upon us from the point where they touched the open water, upon which one or both of them moved as on a pivot, thus gradually nar-

rowing the channel, and coming together with a force that rent the edges considerably, making reports and crackling which heralded the news to us. We looked aghast, for our doom seemed revealed thus suddenly. Slowly, we noticed, ahead the separated portions of the floe reuniting; what quick pain was in that moment! No time was to be lost. Such of our effects as we could grab together conveniently, deeming them necessaries, we at once consigned to the floe on the starboard side, following them as fast as we could jump, striving only to get far enough off to stand clear of the vessel in the coming ruin, and avoid being struck by her masts, spars or timbers, as she flew into flinders.

"Poor little schooner!" I thought, with something of the feeling already springing within me of a sailor to his ship. I believe there was not a man among us but felt a pang reaching beyond his own self-interest, even though that extended very far at the time, doubtless, in thus parting from his ocean-home. To the simple mind of Jack, in which poetical elements work on crude *material*, his vessel is a thing of life, eliciting all the more devotion—perhaps, giving a tinge of chivalry to the feeling—that *she* is always spoken of, and thought of by him in the feminine gender. The "she" fairly twines itself round Jack's heart, and

unless when just leaving her with the view of meeting that other "she," Jack's own wife "Susan," or his sweetheart "Sally," when he gets into port, it is generally with husky voice and a half-brushed away tear, that he turns his back toward her. But in a condition such as we then were in, one would not readily suppose there was room for poetical sentiment as mentioned. Yet there was. I distinctly heard my mess-mate, Jim F——, a tough, free hearted fellow, so express himself when with the rest, standing by on the ice, eying her wistfully the while, with countenance somewhat paler than usual, and with bated breath. We all felt somewhat alike just then., and no doubt acted and looked so.

We had had no time to lower the boats, and it would have been of no use doing so if we had, as we could not have succeeded, in the short time allotted, in hauling them out of danger. They were safer where they were, as if any damage happened we would likely have plenty material from the wreck for repairs. We were waiting for the end in order to seize upon what legacy adversity would leave us, and in order to make the best of it—to go away. Whither? "Oh, Moses!" we knew not, but in an indefinite way we were all homeward bound.

After much shorter delay than I have made in

telling the story with so many moral reflections, our suspense was removed. Yes! The final crash did come, but with a long, rasping sound our gallant little craft—the fair castle of our hopes—rose slowly, tipping slightly over on its larboard side till keel and all were high and dry upon the ice. Thus she remained in our sight for a minute or two, we laughing and joking in the pleasure of reversed despair, propped up by the fragments of the floes broken off by attrition and force of collision, until in a short time—joy of joy!—the movement of the ice became reactionary, the floes, temporarily rejoined, again went assunder, and gently as from a dry-dock by the kind hands of the launcher, our staunch little schooner was again lowered into the dark and gulping water, without receiving the least injury from the rude handling of the ice. We all were astonished, and very gleefully congratulated each other on the wonderful escape we conjointly had had.

The captain was the first to remount the sturdy bulwarks, up which he scrambled like a true member of the Darwin family, as he was *not*, and immediately waving his cap in the kind of chanticleer style of a gallant sailor that he *was*, gave "three hearty cheers for the schooner," in which we all heartily joined, some on the ice and some on the ship's sides climbing up. We had good feelings

then; better I never had! We were out in a sea of ice, cold and weary, but as happy as princes, happier than some royal dukes I doubt not. Why, the Emperor of Russia is, I do believe at this moment, a creature to be pitied in comparison with us then, if to be happy and contented is at all to be regarded a maximum of life.

Subjects for jests and merriment were during the rest of the evening sought sedulously, nor did they fail to put in an appearance. One I remember and shall relate.

As we were all on the ice together it was observed that the cook, a member of the "*cullud persuashun*," who had been taking a siesta in the galley, had just become aware of the fact that scarceness of his personality on board had become desirable, and his elongated visage, pale as midnight without moon or stars, appeared over the gunwale. A cry from the captain arrested his threatened stampede. "Avast there, you black devil! Stir, and you won't any more! You will be killed if you don't remain where you are!" At that instant all the sailors, so they vouched, saw him turn pale "like a ghost." It must of course have been an ebony one the rascals meant; but I cannot say positively now as to what they did then mean precisely, writing as I do at adate so long bsequent to the occurrence. All I remember

distinctly is that at the time my voice was with the rest. I am forced to confess it, being put on oath. Well, after the concussion was over and things were all *in statu quo*, cooky's round unctuous visage recovered, it is needless saying, its normal aspect, glistening with even more than usual streaks of grease and joy.

Again, it was laid to my charge that I had been the first man overboard, and thus, as heading the melee of desertion, entitled to a reward of merit. I was voted a leather medal, to signify that my eccolades had been won. Modesty always my failing, however, stepped betwixt me and the proffered guerdon, all to no purpose. Honors were persistently thrust on me. I had to succumb in blushing trepridation, and was forced to stand over the forecastle with my "donkey" in hand—a veritable "carpet-bagger," and there receive any quantity of figurative laurels, protestingly. At length I managed to do what I, to this day, consider as one of the cleverest feats of my life—a perfect *coup d'etat*.

"*Surely*," cried I, as the bright idea fluttered before me, "*you forgot the man who stuck by the ship*." Sambo was immediately seized, despite all his pleadings and softly modulated "*Oh lordies!*" and a plentiful dusting with flour was administered to him. The leather medal, a piece of old sole-

leather cut oval, was fastened with a tarry hempen cord to his breast. He was then marched aft to the Captain and officers, received an enconium upon his gallant behavior, and covered with banter, flour and glory, delivered a short speech, in which the words "you all knows I can't make a speech" was repeated often, and at last was permitted to disappear.

"*Stick-to-the-ship*" was the name now affixed to him, and until we had returned and were disbanded, that darkey used to give me his blessing sometimes while tears, perhaps of gratitude, yet possibly merriment, were rolling down his shiney cheeks. He was a good-natured fellow, and bore the honors he wore proudly, except on one occasion, on the home passage I remember, when with some culinary articles, dishes and eatables, he was making his way on deck to the after cabin. On came a great sea, which swept the ship from stem to stern. The articles which Sambo bore were carried away by it, and he saved by "the skin of his teeth" only, as he, doubled up on the main halyards, thus drenched and half-drowned, still bearing aloft the standard of the high name he won of "*Stick-to-the-ship*."

After this adventure the schooner still had some hard battling with the ice, yet hardly did it surround her so thickly as before. At length, to

out the story short, we manage to get through the straits entirely, and to emerge upon clear water, on the other side of the blockade. We were longer in this part of the passage which compelled delay, and weary work, with diminutive attainments, and exposure to an unprecedented extent, than we had been in accomplishing the former part of it called "the start" from port to the coast of Labrador. When we finally got rid of the clogging ice, we had been nearly seventy days at sea. Ice we still encountered in detached portions, some icebergs and some floes, but not so compactly as to give us any trouble or uneasiness. We got into a fine open sea, with nothing but a fair wind wanted to enable us to prosecute our voyage.

The wind during the latter part of our voyage, trundling through the ice and 'bergs by stages without relays, had varied considerably, after blowing from a quarter right ahead of our course. This only drew more strength from us, the expenditure of which there was no supercargo on board to note, and if there had been, it would be put down under a minor head to that of the wear and tear of the vessel, which the owners heeded. As far as the wind was concerned then, as it was "only this and nothing more," that had to be consulted, we did not mind much about it. It was not far at a time we had to tow our way. So it did not

signify much. But when we came to open water it was different. Now you might see the old sailors going about the deck carrying about them an air of mystery as they looked away into the sky, puckered their lips and whistled softly for the breeze they wanted. Would you believe it came to them? No matter, they did; for it did come. A fine swanking breeze it was too, blowing right off our starboard quarter, and our little craft skimmed over the waves before it like a regular salamander. Men were constantly stationed at the mast-head in the meantime, for we were now in "the happy hunting grounds" which we had sought, on the look-out for whales; but none were seen; nor a sail either could we descry. The weather too underwent a change as we advanced. It was some times quite warm now, at others cold, sharply biting, very much or altogether according as how the wind blew. We were not far from the land, and though it was not in sight, the color of the water bespoke the fact. When the wind was from the land it was always warmest too.

At last after having been seventy-two days out the welcome cry greeted us of, "*Land ho!*" "*Where away?*" "*Three points on the lee bow!*" In about another seventh part of a second the captain was aloft with his glasses, and after an observation deliberately made, it was decided the

land in sight was "twenty miles to the north'ard," and that east of us was the gulf where we expected to put up for the rest of the fall and there hibernate. All hands were pleased with the voyage. It had proved, though tedious, so far propitious. We had surmounted great difficulties and escaped some awful dangers, and took that success as augury of future. Good fellowship was fully established among us, and we had no cause for incipient mutiny.

We were now in the region where Arctic explorations may be supposed to commence, and it is consonant that I should give here a little bit of genuine Arctic literature, having its origin among that hardy class of men who there venture. It may be taken as an echo from those latitudes, like an old Runic lay, at once giving a specimen of their minds, and affording a reminescence—a souvenir of their lives. It has a ring of its own and is entitled

THE SAILOR'S DREAM.

'Twas homeward bound one night on the deep,
Slung in my hammock fast asleep,
I had a dream, which I thought was true,
Concerning Franklin and his bold crew.

'Twas as we neared the English shore,
I heard a lady sadly deplore;
She wept aloud, and seemed to say,
"Alas my husband is long away!

"'Twas seven long years since that ship of fame,
First bore my husband across the main,
With hearts undaunted and courage stout
To seek a nor' western passage out;

"To seek a passage round the North Pole
With one hundred seamen brave and bold;
With hearts undaunted, and courage true,
'Tis what no man on earth can do.

"There's Captain Osborne of Scarborough town,
Brave Parry and Winslow of high renown,
There's Captain Ross, and many more,
In vain they cruised round the Arctic shore.

"They sailed East, and they sailed West,
Off Greenland's coast where they thought best;
'Mid hardships and dangers they vainly strove,
On mountains of ice their ships were hove.

"In Baffin's bay where the whale-fish blows,
Is the fate of Franklin—no one knows.
Ten thousand pounds would I freely give,
To learn that my husband still did live.

And to bring him back to a land of life,
Where once again I would be his wife,...
I would give all the wealth I ere shall have,
But I think, alas, he has found a grave.

"A voice within that I cannot control,
Is assurance to me of his peace of soul;
Oh, Arctic seas, what you have sealed
At the judgment-day will be revealed!"

CHAPTER III.

DROPPING ANCHOR.

"Pass we the joys and sorrows sailors find
Coop'd up in their winged sea-girt citadel,
The foul, the fair, the contrary, the kind
As breezes rise and fall and billows swell;
Till on some jocund morn—Lo, land, and all is well."

"All hands on deck!" now boomed in drum-like tones in the ears of waking and sleeping, alike rousing from lethargy and from sleep. There is no place where the somnolent are endowed with, such acute hearing as at sea. Soon all of us were on deck or scrambling aloft. Reefing some sails, setting others, and making hurriedly all the required changes to catch the wind from an altered course, was the business that now engaged us. Then, after a brief interval, in which time had been allowed for the accomplishment of all these, came a parallel mandate gruffly bawled by our commander to the helmsmen: "Keep her east!" which order was obeyed promptly as issued.

The fact is, promptitude in the fulfillment of orders is one of those prime habits that have to be assumed on board a ship, no matter where else

they may have been held in slight. "Do your duty at once," is a monosyllabic maxim which he has to there pick up and constantly put in practice, no matter how trifling Jack may have, in former days, considered it. And "Aye, aye, sir," is the word he generally utters, not more in accompaniment with the design understood, as with part of its execution then begun, or with its entire completion. Squals and gusts, and consequent reefing and hauling, do not await his leisure; no more do the officers on deck, who are issuing commands and seeing them obeyed. And if stimulus be at any time wanting to impress this practical truth upon his notice, or cause him to illustrate it more fully, neither is that far to find. A rope's end or a belaying-pin is always at hand, and may be used for that purpose. But it was seldom in my experience necessary in that way to use either. A sailor's education has no more plainly written lesson included within it; and if the scholar gives the least sign of not having coned it properly, if he makes any undue pause over it, a volley of billingsgate poured like grape-shot about his ears is generally found sufficient to stir him up to perfection.

Immediately, like monkeys in the limbs and branches of an arbor, the men were seen scampering up the ratlin, scrambling in the rig-

ging, or half hid amid the shrouds, busy amid the knotted cordage and the flapping canvas ere the orders had died upon the blast or were swept on ahead. For a brief interval the little craft paused, as if on a sudden struck with indecision, —a coquette looking one way, while with half-a-mind kind of air turning the other. It was only for a momentary space, when swinging slowly round in gentle obedience to the admonitions of her rudder, she once more, with an animated dip of her prow, luffed to the wind, her sails bellying out as she breasted the waves obliquely.

With the land just sighted, a speck on the horizon, well upon the larboard, she now made direct for Cumberland Gulf, one of those deep, tortuous, rugged recesses of the sea with which the western shores of Greenland are so abundingly indented. All aloft were now to rights and we had descended; those whose turn below it was diving into their still warm berths in the forecastle. Another hour or two, marked by the striking bell, fleeted by, and the jagged reefs which signal the opening to the gulf began to loom up before us like the backs of companionable seal roaming over their play-ground—ocean's daisyless meadows; but as we came nearer, and they into plainer view, we recognized them as what they were: rocky islets, well-worn precipices, and rounded hum-

mocks, very useful, doubtless, in furnishing some of the very lowest notes and the hoarsest, when the great storm King of the North puts on his royal vesture and goes forth to hold an oratorio upon the waves as in the days of Rollo, of the Vikings and of the Scalds. He singing his anthem of power, and his courtiers joining in the wild chorus, whose melody is discord, this keyboard for the waves to strike might not then be wanting without being missed.

We began to look for our channel through them, incontinently dreaming the while on the chance of being cast away upon them. Naked and rough, more forbidding, desolate spots could hardly be imagined; and admiration for their ragged grandeur, or a search for the sublime therein seemed equally preposterous. The very ideal seemed they to me of an *ultima thule*. But their natural, normal desolation, so to speak, enhanced by the mordacious horrors of an Arctic winter, would, I thought, be like crowning some frightsome gorgon with Madusa's shorn locks, a climax of dread capped indeed by a very quintessent horror. To live here for any length of time, from a week to a month, the guest of a forlorn hope till light had dimmed and the mobile waters around had become like adamant, admitting of being trod upon, and then to have to sally forth in search of

some spot where humanity,—dear then in any form,—could be found, what a situation to be in! —what a doom to undergo! The thought that a few planks were between us and the realization of those dread imaginings gave a shudder to my reflections.

By this time we had arrived pretty close to them; and already the course our vessel was about to take in going through them seemed pointed out by her prow and the finger of her figure-head. Two craggy cliffs on the right, some hundred feet over the rest, seemed like the sentinels of the entrance. On the left extended a low line of rock, over and against which the breakers heaved with ceaseless roar and surf. They were only a mile or two distant from us.

Suddenly the wind shifted and then blew right in our teeth, that is, from the nor'-east. Our headway being thus abruptly stayed all hands were called to action as before. "Haul and reef!" was now the order promulgated; and again on deck and aloft between sea and sky, we gained the full advantage of fresh air so desiderated by me before and since when immured in a house. In as brief a time as is occupied in the relation of the event, we were lying to under a close-reefed mainsail. This implies that every bit of canvas was stowed away, except so much as was necessary to steady

her before the breeze, keeping her as near as possible up to the point already gained,—in the eye of the wind, as the sailors would say,—and thus at safe distance from the rocks, yet near enough to have the sonorous music of the breakers wafted distinctly in our hearing, we patiently waited for a change of wind to drive her in, shortly expecting such. The remainder of that day and the period noted as night—though there was none really, as the sun was in view at the midnight hour in his lowest point of descent—found us still tossing waif-like on the waves, toying with their feathery crests which threw over us their spray, drenching everything; and as it froze, furnishing a kind of vineer in which the whole hulk and under rigging were incased, making it very difficult to perambulate the deck or keep one's feet anywhere over cover. To be able to do this, I had recourse to an expedient, before resorted to, of slipping over my boots a stout pair of woollen socks, as I have observed some people doing on shore, when the streets were very smooth with ice. All my shipmates were similarly rigged, those not having woollen socks putting belts of flannel round their feet. By this precaution alone could we move about without corporal concussion, incurring danger of serious hurt, as the flooring bulwarks, etc., of a vessel are pretty hard to

come against, essentially differing in this respect from softer material. Our oilskins came into requisition again, and they protected us this time from a regular ducking; but the moisture of salt water combining with cold, and supported by the sharp sleety gale, was so penetrative that it either permeated or got over and under these waranted repellants, and I felt as I fulfilled my watch, with not much else to perform but stand around, damply chilled all over. Salt-water air is, according to my observation, imbued with more latent power than any other kind. Like a well developed being who has more power for good or for evil than the weakling of his race, sea-air is far more potent in effecting either heat or cold, in reviving the animal spirits or in subtending them, than land air. How dismally wretched I was that night! How optatively I meditated upon cups of hot coffee, with perhaps no lurking prejudice against something hotter. But we got no such refection. "Stick-to-the-ship" was asleep in his close dormitory, and every coal in his gally-stove was as black as himself. It remained for us to do what was *not* the best thing to be done, yet what in similar circumstances is most commonly done. We kept on wishing for what we knew could not be obtained, until a spirit of discontent was fairly fostered. Thus it is with us through life—is it not? Instead of gen-

erously taking in present and prospective advantages in grateful acquiescence we question them as to their good, and brood over impossible "would-be's" until we have hatched a mutiny against our conditions.

But shadow implies sunshine, and it, though imponderous so far as experiment can show, has a great lever power. From what distance it comes, though lessened in its intensity preserved in its purity. Diogenes, the old tub-man, was right when he told the conquerer of the world that all he wanted from him was a little more of it. He was a philosopher in rags. The rags had nothing to do with his philosophy, neither the philosophy with the rags. Well, I do not think philosophy had anything too much to do with us either just then, but for all that a little sunshine broke in through the clouds, and a correspondence to it in banter followed; and just as we were turning in, when it became our turn to go below, I heard one of my "mates" cheerily remark that it was as well we did not get the coffee, for we would sleep better without it, and have it when we awoke. Now that was finding sunshine in the very darkest circumstances, and driving the fiend of discontent from the forecastle.

One never knows, however, on board ship, what next. Coffee, hot or cold, and sweetened to taste

with molasses. might be in the hand that would never reach the lip. For example, a sea shipped ere the moment of contact might give one a mouthful of salt water instead, swirling the cup and its delicious draught at the same instant down the gullet of some gaping whale, or more likely into the rapacious jaws of some waiting shark, leaving the lately expectant one happy, if he were of a properly balanced mind, that he was not holding on to it at the moment of absorption.

Before breakfast, and just as we had gathered a comfortable quantity of heat under several strata of blankets, "*All hands on deck!*" sounded full upon us. I at once found myself on my feet, and in the following second tumbling up the narrow hatchway leading to the upper-deck. Again, after a slight, lull the wind had chopped round to the south, and we were called aloft to set sail. It was not long before, with a spanking breeze filling the broad sheets, we passed the entrance to the gulf, and making our way through the island-rocks, which form thereto a breakwater, we got fairly in the wide pocket of it.

We found it to be full of islands, barren, wild, and generally precipitous from the shore, with here and there bays scooped out in them with narrow beach. Passing several of them we at length came in view of our anchorage, and saw

around several other vessels of various sizes, some swinging to their cables and some sailing slowly under shortened canvas along the gulf, with the flags of different nations at their mastheads.

After having spent seventy-two days exactly, in battling with distance and in skirmishing with wind and wave, having had a look at Mother Earth but twice during the time, we dropped anchor at a snug little cove in an island called Nyatlick, alongside of two other vessels, one of which was the Helen "F——," of New London, Connecticut; the other the barque "Kate," of Aberdeen, Scotland.

Cumberland Gulf, in which we now lay, is on the western side of Greenland, about the sixty-fifth parallel, and about fifty-two degrees west of Greenwich. It is about sixty miles in length, and about fifty in breadth, at its widest part, near the center. We had penetrated to about fifteen miles from the entrance, which is wide as a whole, though at points closed up somewhat, and had cast anchor a cable's length from the shore, in water about six fathoms deep. We were now in one of the favorite haunts of the whale, where its peculiar food was abundant. With the other vessels, as we shortly learned, a very successful season had been had, and we reckoned that with the five or six weeks yet remaining, ere winter set in, we

might have an opportunity of making some captures; so I anxiously looked forward to making my *debut* in that line of business.

We had scarcely dropped anchor when boats from our two neighbors lying alongside, put out to visit us. Both their captains were in them, evincing great cordiality as they got on board and shook hands with ours, descending quickly to the cabin I suppose to hide their emotions. There they remained without us seeing any more of them till they got ready to depart. But the men who manned their boats, frankly accepting our invitation, shipped in their oars, and making their boats fast alongside, leaped on board with all the *sang-froid* of sailors. We found them very agreeable company, some of the older hands of them and of us being acquainted mutually before. The Scotch were a jolly lot, and the Yankees were not much behind them, both Puritan, showing in their glee and merriment the type to be a changing one at all events; the only kind adaptable to a life of changing conditions, where only principles themselves are immutable, and our perceptions of these merely growing which is more than it suits our pride willingly to admit often.

I learned from the Yankees that they were about to sail, and I forthwith determined to send by them some letter apprizing the folks at home that my "mission" among the whales had com-

menced. Meantime, all were anxiously inquiring the news from home, receiving thankfully and gladly what papers we had, without objecting to them, as I once did to a decent, old-fashioned, Dutch farmer, at whose house in the country I was at one time an unworthy guest. The old gentleman wishing to do me a kindness had wanted to know if I would like to look at a paper as I came from the city. "City folks always do like papers," said he as he handed me the *Tribune* of a date nine months back. Putting out my hand with thanks, expecting to see that morning's edition, I at once rejected it to the amiable old fellow's disappointment. Our friends in Greenland were not so fastidious, though. That it was not that morning's edition, fresh from the press in Nyatlick harbor, did not affect them. They were satisfied to read news three months old, with as much avidity as if it had all transpired the day before. How far back they were in their knowledge! I never before had occasion to know how pack full of useful information about current events I was. Why, my lips spoke wisdom to these poor fellows. I was an authority they looked up to as their fathers did to "Poor Richard's Almanack."

We exchanged, too, with them some of our stock of yarns and songs. One of our visitors, in the role of singer, gave us quite a deal of pleasure. I

never listened to better singing; and some of the songs were, I was told, his own composition. The name of this extraordinary character was, Jamie Mac Gregor, and he occupied a position on the barque "Kate," as an ordinary seaman, which in many ways he was not. He was a nondescript, in whose company I afterward passed some very agreeable hours. Though full of fun, and on the surface careless, outwardly slowish in apprehension, and rather inconsistent in practice, behind the curtain shrewd, remarkably quick in perception, and tenaciously at one with himself in thought and act, seldom drinking anything stronger than whiskey, and never that even except when offered it. He was a fine and intelligent companion when sober, which often happened, and a boisterously good-natured and jolly one when "half-seas over," which chanced more regularly.

Besides a visit from fellow-Christians, who, like ourselves, were bent upon the praiseworthy business of providing means toward furnishing more light to the eyes, and lubrication to the joints of the several nationalities to which they belonged, we were soon favored by a visitation from the natives. These came in their family-boats, like the patriarchs of old, bringing with them their wives and their little ones, their goods and their chattels,

and even—which sounds more like modern life—their packs, not of dry-goods, nor yet of cards, but of dogs. Two boats, well-loaded thus, were seen paddling toward us from an adjacent island; and as we were sitting on our rude benches, bunks, or boxes, entertaining and being entertained, in the manner above related, the news was passed down the hatchway, and breaking up "meeting," and rushing on deck, we prepared to give them a reception. We were anxious to see them, and to have them come on board for two good reasons, curiosity being the one, and convenience the other, the latter the more ostensible. They were supposed to have with them—and the event did not falsify the anticipation—a supply of warm hirsute skins, necessary even now to comfort and well-being, but indispensable to very existence in the long term of winter by forecast seen approaching. As they drew nigh shouts from the ship were sent up, to which they responded, one and all, in a united clamor; and when they were once alongside they were vociferous in their greetings, these sounding very oddly in our ears, like a babbled travesty of English, which originally might have been gotten up by some profane sailors frequenting the coast. That was my impression and inference at first, though on maturer knowledge acquired, I did not think that was so, but

came to regard these utterances of salutation as really part and parcel of their limited language. The similitudes were, I suppose, accidental, but seeing they were so noticeable, and that I have made these remarks I may be excused from setting down here any attempted renderings of the sounds. Suffice it to say anent the subject: that women and men calling aloud in these strange tones elicited peals of laughter from us all, and ribaldry from some. The poor creatures were, to judge from the expressions of their countenances, and by their gesticulations, &c., very much delighted.

They were wee folks, the men not over five feet in height, the women scarcely four, with high cheek-bones, oval faces, dark, straight hair, dark complexion, and with short, broad noses, a little inclined to be puggish. They had dark, bright, little eyes, and were very compactly built, these two last items of fact and feature having the most of character in them, bespeaking the energy and endurance of this diminutive race of men.

A ladder was thrown over the vessel on the starboard quarter, and it was but a few minutes before we had the whole "caboodle" on board, including five men, six women, eight children beyond childhood, and three "picaninnies" in the hoods of their mother's koolatangs. Some of them

could speak broken English very glibly, and all the elders could dabble in and understood it sufficient for barter or ordinary requirements. Those of our number who had been out before, and could speak some of their gibberish, at once struck in, showing their superiority over us "greenhorns," renewing acquaintances and pushing trade to their own advantage. Quite a large quantity of pelts of all kinds were in the boats, and along with them a considerable supply of deer and seal flesh. The latter was hauled on board at once, a return in bottles of molasses and in tobacco being made. A feast was at once begun to be made ready, and the savory odors disseminating themselves around soon gave a pleasant refection to the senses and a whetting to the appetite, such as few can realize who have not for a more or less protracted period been without flesh diet, except in a salted or dessicated form.

In the meantime our guests were moving about the vessel through every nook and cranny, some finding their way into the cabin to see the officers, but the most of them lodging themselves in the forecastle with the men where their headquarters were supposed to be pitched. Here, around the molasses keg was collected for a time a group of tarry-mouthed-looking bucks and squaws, along with the children of smaller size, engaged in the

interesting ceremony of each in turn getting treated to a lick of molasses. No bar-room crowd that I ever saw showed a more striking devotion to suction than did these simple natives to licking, which shows that if the selfishness of humanity has not one kind of idol to prostrate itself before it can easily be supplied with another, and that custom has everything to do in deciding which is "*the thing*," no Esquimau having the least idea of impropriety in shooting out the tongue, and by its means enjoying the saccharine fluid more than a toper has of "putting into his mouth what will steal away his brains."

Both sexes are somewhat similarly habited in skins, prepared by the women, who chew, rub, and dry the same after a peculiar mode, which process they substitute for tanning. Next the skin are worn shirt, drawers, and stockings, made of young seal-skin, with the soft hair next to the body; sometimes deerskin being used instead, for the last mentioned article. Their outer garments consisted of a koolatang reaching down to a little above the knees,—for the men cut evenly around, —for the women coming to a point behind, and reaching to the ankles,—this of seal-skin, with the hair out; a pair of unmentionables, also of seal-skin, differently formed for the sexes, but for both reaching below the knee, where they overlap a

pair of deer-skin boots, with the hair out, furnished with soles of tough seal-bull hide. Thus accoutered, winter and summer, by the aid of cuticle accretions, with a fine supply of oleagenous filth superadded, and preserving in all seasons a delicate sensitiveness approaching to hydrophobia against all ablutions which can not be too much commended, these people manage to thrive through summer heat and winter cold rubust and healthy, and not over-prolific.

As the kind of dress and gear best fitted for the climate and country, we now succeeded in bartering with the natives for a similar outfit, and I who with silk chapeau have erewhile stepped into a fashionable tailor's and paid down my greenbacks for his glove-fitting handiwork in broadcloth or doeskin now came to "such vile use" as that of handing over the gunnels, instead of counter to a dirty little Esquimau, five bottles of molasses and six plugs of tobacco, indifferently called the "stinking" and "the fragrant weed," for what he and his wife could do for me in the way of fixing me up in the latest style of Esquimau dandyism. The women were the only tailors, the men looking on at their labors with the calm, stolid indifference of Turks, if not absent on some fishing or hunting expedition; they, in having brought in the game and flayed it, having done all required of them,

all else in the manufacture, from curing the raw material to cutting it up and sewing it together in the shape of garments, being classed by them as within the province of feminine industry. God bless the women! Men could never get along without them, neither in torrid nor in temperate, nor in frigid longitudes.

In a few weeks we were all attired in similar style with the natives, looking as much like them a short way off as one fish merely a little bigger than another of the same species looks like its congener swimming by it. We were conscious of having then made good our debut in foreign travel and adventure as we looked at ourselves in Mother Eve's first mirror, or trod the deck so noiselessly, as if walking barefoot.

Daily, hourly, minutely after this, I may say, was our intercourse with these simple creatures; and though we might readily enough have conceded to us the advantages of a towering superiority, yet, so far as giving and receiving benefits were concerned, they were our patrons, our cherishers, in fact our good Samaritans, and we conversely, the constant recipients of their favors. What we gave them in return, however valued by them, was in no way adequate compensation for their attentions and favors, etc. But this relationship was not maintained upon any false footing, I wish it to be

understood. In no way did we use fraud or chicanery with them to accomplish a gain which was so desirable to us; but these poor children of nature had wants so few, so simple, and so easily gratified, that it was utterly impracticable to attempt liquidation of them according to principles of equity as existing among ourselves. Stores, for instance, given in barter? Where had they store-houses in which to house articles or material for future use? Practical lessons in economy they never had, and theoretical ones were equally beyond our power to administer to their understanding, as beyond their capacity to receive. A little shot (not more than they could readily bring away in their hands), a little powder (not more than they could safely be entrusted with without danger of having their whole encampment blown up by its ignition, though fire is not a familiar plaything of theirs), were about all that was necessary to furnish them of ammunition. Coffee or tea they could carry away with them in fluid extract by our corking it up in bottles for them. These they were fond of; but what conveniences had they for masking either, or what art had they to manage the mysterious processes of their decoction, which, after all, only a few gifted dear dear wives and dear good mothers, with an occasional miraculous cook, even among ourselves, know any anything

at all about that is worth knowing. Money in greenbacks or gold, by which they could have in their power to buy when they wanted what they wanted from such vessels as entered their harbors, —the latter learning to bring with them supply suited to demand, as the former succeeded in cultivating the graces of civilization by gradual increment of desire? Bless your dear philanthropic souls, every man's son and woman's daughter of you who would suggest such ideas concerning means suitable, what does your poor raw-meat-eating, wild-beast-clad Esquimau care about those impositions of ours which war and its impelled necessities have thrust on us? Oh, to be sure, they might, for the vignettes, the engravings, the colorings, but for naught else, depend on it. You could not convince them of the extrinsic value of these; and as for gold, Robinson Crusoe, in his desert isle, when he came to look over the effects the sea had thrown up to him, was not a more sincere non-worshiper of the great bugaboo Mammon than they, each and all, in Esquimauxdom. Then what was left for us to do than that with the mutual aid and good fellowship which only a a most perfectly developed Christianity or utter demagogery can bestow, we should live together amicably, availing ourselves of one another's help in becoming as comfortable and happy as

we could be, without troubling the present with any burden of obligations either to defray at once or to carry into the future, no more than if we were all Millerites, or had fallen into a community who expected the end of the word immediately after breakfast or dinner, some day about then.

Touching upon religion recalls to my mind how unfructuous were all my efforts to ferret out from them what were their beliefs in this direction, or, indeed if they had clearly defined ones of any kind relating to a Supreme Being or the great life. When the sun appears they hail him with gesticulations and low mutterings that might be interpreted to signify worship or fetichism; but at any formula of creed or of ceremony, I was not privileged to listen or to look. Perhaps like the mysteries of the Eleusis, this was considered no fit object for the prying eyes of the uninitiated to dilate upon.

I once saw a marriage ceremony among them. Their habits do not give much sanctity to the condition; and the whole significance of the ceremony was nothing more than what a civil compact could impose for the pair to live together while it so suited them. In aught connected with life in the dearest and most sacred tie of matrimony they more resemble the sunflower, I imagined, in its liability to bend before every gust that comes upon it, rather than in its sign of unalterable fealty to

one. On the occasion to which I allude they all assembled on the ice, like the Shakers, the men being on one side, the women on the other. A very relishable article of diet in the shape of a frozen dear paunch stood in the center, to which the "anticote," or headman, advanced and with a knife, excised a slice which he ate, handing the instrument to the bridegroom, who likewise advanced, cut a slice, and going up with it in his hand put it in the bride's mouth, who ate from his hand and then went up with him to the mess, where she did similarly by him. Then facing each other they clasped hands, the head-man said something over them, the company generally pitched in, the feast of raw meat followed, and they went to their egloe a united and, it is to be hoped, a happy pair. The following poem, suggested by the incident briefly described, which my Scotch friend, J. Mc. G., and I witnessed together, was one of the many effusions of his pen which gave him so much popularity among us while we were together in Greenland. I introduce it here a little ahead of time, as the last part of this chapter has been generally, hoping this discursive manner may not be considered quite unacceptable.

ESQUIMAU LOVE SONG.

TRANSLATED BY J. MC. G.

Oh, meet me when the northern lights
  Shoot out athwart the sky;
When bears are on their rambles wide
  And sea-birds no more fly.

"Green bowers" there are, where sailors say
  Fond lovers meet at e'en;
I cannot say what these can be,
  Nor do I mind one pin.

But on the leeside of yon 'berg,
  Moored close beside the shore,
Oh, little walrus hear me pledge
  My love forevermore.

When summer comes that icy hill
  May slip far out to sea;
But anchored to a sweet content,
  My cub, I'll cling to thee.

When winter leaves I'll seek the fiords,
  To hunt and fish alone,
Unless you choose to share with me
  The pickings of a bone.

And now I'll build an egloe quick,
  With sealskin soft and warm
Within it stowed, and oil of seal
  To grease your every charm.

I'll stand at blow-holes in the cold,
  At sixty under zero,
To spear a seal; and on my sledge
  I'll heave it like an hero.

Then do not go so rapid off,
  Your haste, I pray, restrain;
For long before the dawn, my deer,
  Your lamp-side you may gain.

Oh, yield me now your smiling lips,
  Oleagenously bright;
Nor haste as if "to try them out"
  In a brief fall-time night.

And if the cold, with jealous spite,
  Should glue your lips to mine,
Against that fate, mine eider duck,
  Would you, would I repine?

Oh, then, indeed, if ne'er before
  We might be pained to part,
Each effort, like an harpoon-line,
  A-tugging at each heart.

And if your folks sit up for you,
  Their rest cannot be spoiled,
For long they yet may have for sleep
  Ere sun-rise streaks the wild.

Then meet me 'neath the northern lights
  That dance across the sky;
When winter's night, o'er sea and land,
  Looks with an icy eye.

CHAPTER IV.

GREENLAND.

At length this *terra incognita*, of which at one time or another, so much has been said and so little really known, lay before us. The far land of Runic tale and of Scandinavian legend, situated at such comparatively brief interval from our own continent, and which had been discovered by Europeans so long before it, stood within easy reach of a scallop-boat and of a scull-oar; and I experienced in taking cognizance of this fact some of those novel sensations which even the least imaginative are liable to, on finding themselves for the first time on a foreign shore which had heretofore existed to them but in the iridescent domain of the fancy. Yet the real novelties which awakened these in me were very few and circumscribed, as brief inspection plainly told. The surface of the country appeared nude and sterile—a grey gneiss of diversified form universally noticeable, here as a jagged and rough boulder, there as a sharp rugged fringe stiffened in mid-air, yonder as a little cove scooped out of the island, and away beyond us mountains on either side of the gulf, their summits covered with perpetual snows and only

their sides and bases exposed. I reflected that it was hardly worth while having come so far for such prospect—though one certainly not entirely destitute of attractiveness—hence, in some eyes beauty after its kind. Yes! There is charm for those *en rapport* with Nature in her every aspect as in all her capricious moods and changes. Without cultivation the senses may not always be able to discover this, and it may seem to them paradoxical, but from the microcosmic mind of man may be summoned up sympathies as multiform as the outward universe may demand, from, for instance, the admiration of some fastidious beauty for the glumaceous beauty of a Skye-terrier to the rapture of a refined scholiast for a piece of frowning mountain sterility. And the natives of Greenland have, without shade of doubt, also a spectrum of their own through which to look upon their beloved country, and that quite different to what I can form any idea of, else quick expatriation would follow, and bears and walruses would be made happy in the disappearance of troublesome neighbors.

Indeed what people, wherever placed, is without the idiosyncrasy thus designated? No matter what may be the natural disadvantages belonging to his place of nativity and youth, man rather accommodates himself to them than is found in antagonism of the affections toward them. By habit or by the preferences tradition inculcates, he may even become

glued to them. Stout ignorance presenting a splendid proof-armor against discontent in his circumstances—misery fixed giving no abrasions to be complained of. Patriotism there may flourish, as it does, over the whole earth in more or less grand blossoming, as the Scottish poet has it:

> "There is a spot of Earth supremely blest,
> A dearer, sweeter spot than all the rest,
> Where brighter suns dispense serener light,
> And milder moons imparadise the night,"

and that spot is one's own "home."

Yet I never have encountered or heard of that Quixotic hero—a Greenland Patriot—one distinguished among his countrymen for his *amor patriæ* and the noble resolutions, self-sacrifice and illustrious efforts in behalf of his country therefrom springing. Well, let us sanguinely suppose that when the occasion comes it will bring with it the man. That future to which we are in the custom of relegating our own great men when we vaguely feel our want of them, is quite big enough to hold a Greenland patriot too.

In the meantime, here we would like to enter a protest against what we deem a most flagrant breach of veracity on the part of the Muse of History, who has lisped the same from ancient times till even Science is compelled to accept it in part, with protest, instead of bestowing on it thorough repudiation: *Greenland is not green*, hardly any of it is; it is

just the very reverse, almost anything else in fact; and for this mendacity in making it appear by name as if it were so, the Historic Muse certainly merits a raking such as I am now getting ready to give her.

Who has not observed that most antediluvian of all antiquarians, the geologist, as with hammer in hand and satchel slung on side, he goes creeping like the ivy from one formation to another, from a quarry to a deserted wallow, from a protrusive rock to a rocky gully? And as he goes, I have observed him picking and prying, glancing over strata and opening stony crypts to read the long gone history of fossils. Now it has occurred to me that just so, only correspondingly instead of literally, one might perambulate the field of language, particularly its department of nomenclature, there finding fossils whose history he might decipher approximately in like manner. As examined *in situ* while traversing this department, this fossil name Greenland might afford as good specimen as could be found. Suppose it is so exactly. Here then, I would say, some grand swindler of "the days of other years" had been at work, and this is his veritable imprimature. Some fellow, "who left his country for his country's good," came out here from more enlightened regions, and then returning has befooled his compatriots with accounts of a splendid region he had discovered, but overshooting the mark, found himself for very consistency obliged to affix upon it a name which would in sound itself

place the correctness of his description beyond cavil, he thus raising himself into their favor by buncombe. Now this shrewd surmise, for it is no other than shrewd, is about as near the facts of the case as can be got from any book; for, dear reader, "Murray's Handbook for Greenland" is not yet out. Let us see what we can, however, from authentic writings on the subject. From which source the following:

Greenland is an isolated body of land—larger than islands are commonly defined as being, and, in the uncertainty which veils its northern portion, accepted as continental. Commencing at Cape Farewell, 59 deg. 49 min. north, it extends to an unfixed point at or near the pole. In the latter part of the ninth century it was discovered by a Norseman from Iceland, who gave it the appropriate name of "White Shirt," as strikingly beautiful as it was distinctive in a day when that article of body-wear was not often seen in that bleached condition. Shortly subsequent to this one of the name of Eric—whose sobriquet was The-Red, having occasion to conceal himself in distance after committing a murder, thither hied and there remained for about three years or until the odor of the villainy had somewhat blown off. Then he reappeared with lofty boastings of new discoveries he had made, of their fertility, etc. For this he was justly punished, in the natural sequence of events, by being obliged, from the popular excitement his wild

romancings produced, to lead thither a colony of the too credulous. As might have been expected, half his ill-directed followers perished. The other half he managed to locate on the west coast, the only part of the country they found tenable, the eastern being faced with precipitous cliffs to the water's edge. Mr. Eric The-Red did not, it is recorded, permanently remain with the inauspiciously planted colony. Cold as were his surroundings there he probably found it too hot for him. Heading a party who again trusted to his swagger and enterprise, he started for pastures green elsewhere. By good fortune instead of skillful management these hardy mariners are supposed thus to have succeeded in discovering the Taunton River; this about the year A. D. 1000.

But the several colonies so planted did not flourish. On the contrary they one and all, with subsequent similar experiments, succumbed miserably to the inclemency of the weather and the scanty means afforded for life's sustenance. Some pasturage and narrow stretches of arable land existed along the fiords which numerously indent the shore, but insufficient to enable them to take a firm and permanent root.

At length in the year 1721, a Lutheran clergyman of nomadic tendencies, availing himself of his great historic researches and encouraged by the glorious prestige of this country's past, founded amid the obliterated ruins of its former settlements a new,

and as it has proved a permanent colony, which has once more placed Greenland within the pale of Christendom, although to a great extent it is still without it. It has now several settlements upon its western shore, and is divided by the Danish Government into two districts, each governed by a Superintendent. Its population is naturally separated into two distinct classes—aborigines and those of European descent. The former, called Skrolings or Esquimaux, retain their original independence or savagery, having no government other than that of the family or tribe. Their number cannot be accurately ascertained, as they are scattered over the broad expanse of fiord, estuary and gulf as far as 73 degrees north, living amid the frozen or gelid waters, or amid the reefs and islands, on fish, seal and deer chiefly. The semi-civilized who boast higher conditions of life are descendants of Danes with some admixture of native blood, along with a few native Danes, in all numbering about twelve thousand. Education is afforded them in schools having subsidies from government. In these the simple branches of reading and writing are taught mainly. The form of their religion is the Lutheran or Moravian types—the Lutheran being the one having the governmental sanction.

It is somewhat curious to note that through all the vicissitudes it has undergone the name so inauspiciously, so inappropriately bestowed by Mr. Eric

The-Red, that hardened villain and prince of brags, has stuck to it so pertinaciously. Several distinguished voyageurs, in the interest of the Dutch and of the English, have vainly tried to furnish one less significant of imposture. "Friesland," "Land of Desolation," etc., etc., have been alternately bootlessly pasted upon the charts which purported to give the contour of its coast. The slips on which these corrective expressions were inscribed could not have been other than of silk tissue—whether or not in that day that kind of paper was invented—as the large boastful characters of Mr. Eric The-Red have invariably reappeared shining through them. Consequently, to recur to the idea entered as a prelude to this historical disquisition, Greenland, in our explorations geographical and etymological, makes appearance as a huge fossil fraud of the buncombe genus, that first stalked abroad from the open boat of the Scaldic Viking in the end of the tenth century, by means of which he compounded a felony and then endured punishment indirectly for so doing. It remains to attest—as if it were needed for that purpose now-a-days—the success of *humbug*.

The country, as one might suppose from its position and from its limited pastures, is not the favored resort of any great variety of fauna. Among these, however, man occupies a respectable position, taking a leading part in their quarrels to the death, and asserting his superiority there as elsewhere, by an

inventive genius, a cunning nature and an enterprising spirit, the white or polar bear and a little vulpine fox chiefly disputing his dominion by aggressive measures. Seals and walruses are amphibia holding part possession; and deer and mountain hare, with a few other species of granivora, seek quiet tenure of the more inland parts—their rights however disputed by packs of canine savages, degenerate descendants of the breed allied to the natives, who are entitled to separate mention. These dogs are the only domestic animals known to the natives. In winter they are extensively used by them for draught purposes, and in summer have with their masters a long holiday, merely guarding their valuables from the rough hands of despoilers. They are large and shaggy, require no grooming but what they can give themselves by a roll in the hard snow, require little food, and can do much work in travel.

The carnivora live on each other much as mankind do at a pinch, but generally upon the weak and peaceable of other species. Chiefly, however, their diet is piscatorial, the surrounding waters affording an abundant and diversified supply. The vegetarians, such as deer and hare, find plentiful aliment for all their numbers, in summer, among the fiords where a long, slender, sweet grass springs up rapidly, and in winter beneath the snow, where a nutritious moss, protected from a freezing death by the chill coverlid,

is found thickly netting the ground, which they dig at with their forefeet.

The flora of the country, as might be premised, is less distinctly noticeable. A wide and careful research can alone result in bringing them forth to notice in any completeness of array, and this is what has never been done; but it is in no wise within the filmy bonds of unacquired knowledge to state that they are scarce and stinted in individuals and in species. Yet, scattered here and there, I detected some among them that struck me as being very lovely, gifted with peculiar delicacy and grace to captivate without seeming to challenge. Perhaps if I had met them in a garden or conservatory I might just have missed that impression, but coming across them as I did in uncultivated spots and in surprising situations, noting their fine tints, and the quiet modesty they breathed along with their soft exhalations of perfume, I could at the time have sworn them compeers of those of the hot-bed and the parterre, nay even outrivaling some of the "prides." Only I never do like to think of flowers as in rivalry. Is it not enough that there is so much of that discordant element for action among ourselves, without, by fiction, imputing its blighting evil to those marks of innocent delight. Rather, I would say, let them blossom and die without the desecration of notice. But how much of refining elevating influence is there that would be lost to us, if we were no more to be gifted

by power to be regaled by their sweetness and beauty, or softened in our selfish hardness by chaste dalliance with their charms? By the presence of them even in cold bleak Greenland, were we not informed that we were still within the confines of God's land, and amid the evidences of His superabounding care and tender love? Oh yes! Equally, as if in the most sensuously lovely of earthly prospects, were we impressed with this, looking upon flowers springing forth in a spot destitute of every attraction otherwise.

Flowers are Nature's fine filagree work dotting over the landscape. Trees are the architectural columns with which she builds it up into perfect symmetry, giving to it form and feature conserving other important ends than directly that of the æsthetic. They are useful in her economy. In Greenland there are few of these. They are not so much required in that inhospitable climate, and reactively the climate does not favor their growth. They are to be found at intervals in small detached clumps, or solitary in some more sheltered nook—the tallest of them attaining a height of eighteen feet, and many of them mere shrubs, only to be recognized as trees from their organic identity with the known giants of the forest.

Once, not far from the mainland, on one of the small islands that stud Cumberland Gulf, I came across what I discovered to be a pine-grove. The dell where they were was sheltered by a southern slant, and was well protected from the north by a

broad crag. They were mere dwarfs with small horizontal branches jutting out in seeming stiff precision; and standing slightly over them I looked down upon their humble tops like another Gulliver upon another Lilliput. My fancy at once drew comparison between them and their colossal congeners in the American forest, and incontinently I imagined them little Shetland ponies, while these others loomed up in my mind's eye like magnificent steeds, who could "snuff the battle from afar" and hold the north wind at defiance. Very hardy little shrubs too were these, and very good brooms I thought they would make. I almost felt tempted to get astride one of them and try whether or no I could hit on the magic "word of power," which, as veracious chroniclers say, the witches used, when mounting on such they flew through the air and a keyhole into the King of France's cellar. How these cellars might have suffered if in my case then the mystery had been exemplified!

By far the most important of the country's productions, or what is generally classed as of them, to use a Hibernianism, is not found in it at all but on its outside. Its circumjacent waters teem with life, which tempts the enterprise of civilized nations, and from them pelt, oil, bone, etc., are to be had. The seal, the walrus and the polar bear are all in this way fit prey of commerce, but chief of them all is the whale, "that greatest of the works of God," for which we were in these parts.

This animal, as all of the cetacean kind, is not to be classed among fishes, which a casual observer is apt to do, seeing it has its habitat with them. It is a warm blooded creature and, as much as the seal, the walrus and the alligator, is an amphibian, provided with lungs requiring a fresh supply of air within a short and stated period. Many different varieties of it are found throughout the great oceans of the world, though from some places, where not long since it used to frequent, as the eastern shores of our own country, it has been driven, owing to the constant war waged by the mercenary interests of man.

Along the shores of Greenland there are likewise several varieties to be distinguished, but that known as the Greenland, or *par excellence*, the Right whale, is the most valued. This kind is often over one hundred feet in length. It has a mouth so capacious that a man can stand erect within it, and can easily be understood as having formed, on a special occasion, a very roomy enough house of correction for a recalcitrant seer. It is so wide that unless Jonah had been of more than usual size, he could stand in the inside and stretch his hands either way, yet fail to touch the edges. The tongue would not stand much in his way either, for that is small and short—not being used for scandal. Yet so small is its gullet that in trying to gorge an object more than a few inches in diameter strangulation would ensue.

Wonderful indeed that this hugest of all beings

now on the earth finds support for such an immense system unprovided even with teeth for mastication. Still is the wonderful increased when we learn how in this extremes meet. Its chief sustenance is comprised in the smallest of known organisms. Infusorial animalculæ—countless myriads of them in a swallow—is its diet almost exclusively; and as it moves along near the surface of the water, at the pace of a swift walker, with its mouth wide open, it scoops them in by the gallon. A complex organ situated in the back of the mouth, from which whalebone is obtained, and known as the bellendæ, sifts the mass as through a sieve, so that objects too large can be rejected. This food is called "squid."

Its immense strength, together with its wondrous agility, might be presupposed sufficient safeguard to it from capture by man or any such pigmy. But no! Not only man, but an enemy it encounters in its own habitat, is able to prey upon it and make it fly before it. This is a small sword fish which can make itself felt while its small size conceals it readily from revenge. A boat also will approach it, hid by its clumsy dimensions, and deal death to it whose power could easily smash it into atoms. A blow from its flukes directed from beneath would dash the boat and its contents high in the air, as one would twirl a silver quarter with the thumb. A knock from its huge head—particularly in the case of one pugnacious species with which I have had to

deal—the sperm whale of the South Seas—as with gathered force it chose to resist an attempted injury, would stave in the timbers of the stoutest vessel. But Providence, as if to equalize matters and secure to men dominion everywhere on earth, has made the eye of this great being of small size for such a body, and moreover placed it in a position where it can have very limited range. Its bulk rises up as a screen for its wary and designing foe, offering him at the same time choice of parts for the insertion of his deadly weapon. Its hearing is acute, but not so detective, as can easily be understood when its own noises, the rush of water around it, is drowning of other sounds lesser and more distant. A cautious approach is necessary. That obtained and the way clear for a chase, it is only in fractional proportion that escapes are ever effected; though frequently they are, from ice or some other cause intervening, beyond calculation.

The whale, as well as was remarked of birds, has furnished to Science some important knowledge precursive of what has been obtained after prolonged effort by man. By a whale the north-west passage was first announced to the world. One was caught near Greenland bearing in his blubber a harpoon with line attached which had been recently inserted. The name of the vessel to which that weapon belonged was cast upon it. This was noted, and on inquiry after return, it was discovered that three

days were all that had been required for its passage and recapture since the vessel to which the harpoon belonged lost its prey in Behring's Straits. The record kept by the captain of the one vessel, when compared with that kept by the captain of the other, clearly proved this, and no other way but through such passage being available, the announcement of the existence of this channel, so long a mooted question, was forever solved. Now since this occurrence I do not know how many similar took place, but I have never yet met a man who was a regular whaler, having made more than half a dozen voyages after whale oil, but what *his* vessel on a former voyage had met with just such a herald of the north-west channel. It is singular, but true—that I met these individuals. Sir Robert McClure, in the "Investigator," afterwards fully substantiated the information brought by the whale; and though it can not be denied that he is good authority for the fact, the whale is ahead of him not only in time, but in strength of testimony, inasmuch as he, having to leave his vessel behind him in the ice after long disappointment of delay, thus failed to give the problem practical solution in the fullest sense, whereas the whale did.

Yet though the importance of this part of the globe is greatly enhanced by its whale fisheries, etc., its true commerce is little touched by them. Whaling vessels from every quarter of the civilized world

congregate in the harbors of the country, fitted out completely for the business in which they are engaged. These centre in themselves supplies and assistance in any way needed, from a full store of the necessaries of life to whatever conveniences or articles may be found requisite in accomplishing repairs, etc. Some of the companies—the one I was engaged with among them—keep stations on the coast, and, at a minimum of outlay, natives in their employ, who knowing not the use of money, are fully satisfied as already stated with what goods, trinkets, weapons or ammunition may be doled out to them in lieu of wages. Their vessels arrive in these waters without being hampered by the terms of any sealed treaty. Taking free entry, where there is none to dispute, after pursuing their vocation of spoliation, they, as independently as they entered, depart. The flag of a foreign power is seldom or ever lowered in its harbors; for foreign vessels seldom touch at the few ports of entry for anything, the abundant harbors of convenience serrating the shore being untenanted except by the lawless tribes of aborigines, sparsely scattered. Nothing to be purchased of any consequence, nothing accrues to the country from these visits except loss, in the steady drain kept by these means upon its adjoining wealth. Personal effort and skill is within itself exerted, and if failure attends them one season success may the next, but the country they visit knows nothing about that. A good cargo and

a fair market in the port whence they came and whither they return, is all that is looked for, is all they attain.

The wages of the hands depending in amount or in nullity of amount upon the issue of the voyage, whalers are engaged upon what are called shares. With the exception of a small installment advanced before starting, and deducted on return when the balance sheets are adjusted, they receive nothing in the shape of money which they can spend (freely) until paid off. So it is plain that in every way both the country and its outside products are much imposed on by these fleets of commerce, and that only in a negative sense is the former more benefited by them than the latter.

The remote future may have a different tale than this to tell however; for the mineral wealth is no doubt great, appearing so in many cases on the very surface. One island in the gulf where we rendezvoused was chiefly composed of lead of such pure quality, that it had only to be taken up in pieces to be used for marking on wood or paper. Seams of coals are likewise exposed, and quite frequently used by ships in need of a supply. Other minerals likewise are there in great store; but it will take probably long before they are sought, not till the population of the world has greatly increased, and not until other well-known mining places have been exhausted of their treasures.

Fish of many different species—all edible and in

fine condition, swarm its shores, and aquatic birds in immense numbers and in considerable diversity of kind, are likewise there. The latter, in the breeding season, form communities of vast size and complexity close to the shore and on the islands. There they exhibit the wonder of each individual being able to distinguish its own nest, where so many are thickly packed together, so exactly similar. As if their trust were in numbers, though wanting in knowledge to make that available, one may wander forth among them during the period of incubation, without causing any general commotion. The bird sits quietly at his feet without stirring or even ruffling its plumage till he goes to put his hand almost upon it.

Fish are easily caught. So keen and healthy are their appetites that the little boy, with the bent pin attached to a piece of string, which he holds in the meadow brook in vain hope of coaxing some foolish trout for supper, might consider himself there accounted as a regular angler.

Another animal, whose existence in these latitudes might be doubted if I did not have good proof that it was there, and no mistake, is the mosquito. No puny representatives of the race either, but those whose ancestry may well be claimed for New Jersey, during the summer months are heard to sing their song, and are felt to do their business in true workmanlike fashion. My neck has bled from their at-

tacks, my face and hands have been blistered by them, and as other parts of my person, better protected, have felt as if scoriated from their attentions, I have a right to witness that mosquitoes are found in Greenland.

CHAPTER V.

A RAMBLE.—THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES.

THE extraordinary length of the day we remarked upon, and gradually got used to, as we ascended into the higher latitudes, and at last got to where no night really existed. And now at anchor, with the land close upon our lee-bow, we could not help again noting what to us, from all previous experience, recommended itself as a very strange phenomenon. Precursively, about 11 P. M., the sun in these latitudes dipped just below the horizon, to reappear in about a couple of hours. In the interval darkness did not ensue, nor did "the moon, pale regent of the sky," assert her prescriptive right in the sidereal heavens "to rule the night," for the soft summer twilight which pervaded the scene was borrowed from the superabundant effulgence with which the sun still flooded the sky. It was a nigh reflection of him, and resembled a long-drawn-out sweetness, in which every object around was stupid, resigning itself to the languor of a celestial dalliance. Very soon, even that short and imperfect intervenience between days melted away, and no time in which the sun was not above the horizon followed.

While moored by the island, visited by the natives, and by our fellow whalers, we began to fancy our situation so pleasant, in having always the daylight accessible, that there was no more use for observing habitually, as hitherto, the distinctions between day and night, now that nature had obliterated these landmarks. Sailors, indeed, are more facilely apt to slide into some such negligent habit than others, especially when outward means of forcing the observance upon their attention are withdrawn, from the fact that their duties make equal draught upon them, in their different seasons. To go to bed now when obliged to from sheer exhaustion, and to get up, when so disposed, with the ever bright luminary to direct our course wherever fancy or duty—more frequently the latter though—might direct, seemed to the novice enthusiasm of some among us, like some special favor of the gods, which mortals must take good advantage to show appreciation of. Very quickly we learned better. We became fagged and worn out. The irregular life showed itself in lassitude, dyspepsia, general debility, etc. The natives seconded these lessons of experience, derided the unwisdom of our conduct, and let us know that it was usual with them, at the periods when there is no night nor day, to observe the habit of going to rest and rising at the recurrence of the corresponding time, as if outward appearances still prevailed, except on emergencies, and that by this means they

enjoyed health. These savages were enough versed in astronomy for all requirements in this direction. They knew in summer by the position of the sun, in winter by that of a certain cluster of stars, whether the time upon which either of these looked down was day or night, and what particular time of either it was to a nicety, without being able to apportion it into exact hours or minutes, those artificial fractional spaces marked by the civilized. Eating-time, sleeping-time, rising-time, etc., followed each other with them, regularly as circumstances would admit, and just as well as if each house had its eight-day clock hanging on the wall. These are their natural ways of dividing time. They know no other, nor can they imagine any other; yet considerable accuracy in practical horology is attained by them. This method is liable to infraction of course from the usual vicissitudes of savage life. They are not naturally the most regular people in the world, notwithstanding what has been said. After a feast a famine; after a fast a feast, are often cases with them. A savage is generally slothful until necessity in the form of the wolf at the door forces him to take down his weapons and start in the pursuit. Then with a mad voracity opposite to the great patience he showed while enduring hunger, it becomes one of the marvels of human nature to witness what he is able to accomplish in the way of a gorge—in this line excelling the civilized man completely.

Having arrived late in the season, we did not anticipate much of the peculiar sport for which we had come, but, in case an opportunity might occur, we kept a constant outlook, while at the same time preparing for a surprise. So having not much to do, we had the desire intrude upon some of us to form a party, and make an excursion into the country a little way. The natives were constantly coming and going. They came alongside in their little boats, and readily clambered up the gunwale to the deck, both men and women. Very dirty, generally, we did not court their acquaintance so eagerly as at first, though they were so good-natured we could not refuse them what little privileges or boons they wanted. Both men and women continually begged tobacco—the main staple of their desires,—and we readily gave them what of it they required, in return for, or in expectation of yet receiving at their hands full equivalent. We soon became very well acquainted with them, and all of us excepting one man were on very good terms with them. But him they could not abide; neither man, woman nor child among them could be prevailed upon to approach him, nor to hold any dealings with him, from about the time of their first visit. A few of them, at or about that time, were clustered round some of us while we amused them by exhibiting novelties, and ourselves by marking the degree of wonder excited. This individual from New York, named Jim B——,

was supplied with a set of false teeth, and thinking, poor fellow, to cap the climax, he took out before them the whole set. For an instant they seemed petrified. We did not at once understand the horror they felt, when a simultaneous yell broke from the startled group. Over the side of the vessel they darted into their boats, some making such haste that they were almost falling into the water. Presently they were all paddling ashore as fast as they could, despite all the encouraging signs we made them. This individual alone had to keep at a respectful distance, and though anxious to join in the excursion we were about to get up, it was impossible for him to accompany us, if we desired any assistance from the natives, which we did. It was a sad disappointment to him and somewhat of one to us, for he was excellent company, and we would all have enjoyed having him with us.

On board ship, when in harbor or port, Sunday is the great day for *getting* ashore. All our time through the week may be occupied in taking in cargo or discharging the same, but on Sunday a little relaxation is claimed in turn by the men, though on a whaler it is somewhat different, the pressure of business, whether in catching or in "trying out," admitting of no distinction of days being made, but seeing we had neither the one nor the other, so far, to do, and that Sunday came round to offer us the traditional relaxation, we claimed and got the privilege

of going ashore on that day. Notwithstanding early precepts to the contrary of this proceeding, no conscientious scruples hindered us from seeking to enjoy ourselves in the proposed way, for we certainly might be as well employed ashore as on board, or in fact, better.

Accordingly everything necessary was prepared —our "holiday rig," in the shape of an extra large bandanna with bow-tie *donned*, and provisions for luncheon stowed away. The ship's boat which was to convey us to the landing was also in readiness and the Esquimaux who were to be our guides in our search after something, were on hand. But alas! for holiday neckerchiefs and visions of buttermilk served out by pretty dairymaids at farm-houses! It came on a storm—the sky became suddenly overcast and we decided not to go!

Though in more genial latitudes this was still the hottest part of the year, and even here it was still summer, fate so utterly refused to smile upon our enterprise, as to stay our advancement while we are jostling at its very wicket gate. A snow-fall in these latitudes, though never of very long continuance, is very dense while it lasts, even in summer, when it is rather unusual. We felt discouraged by it, and gave up at once the idea so fondly harbored and so happily greeted when we expected its realization. And this was just like what happens in sailor-life constantly. Whenever there is a strong anticipation of some pleasure the probabilities are that

just as one gets ready to embark in it, it is capsized before him, and he is lucky if he has escaped the ducking which might accrue from the swamping of it. So we gave up the venture. What use in trying to explore under such disadvantages? What great traveler ever did? Taylor? Oh, he is like the man with the cork leg on springs, or like that other who was chased across a ten-acre lot by a mad bull. He never traveled since he got his first stage-ride. But Livingstone or Stanley? They are *travelers bona fide*, and I never heard of either of them going on through a snow-storm so blinding that they could not see the country about them. We had no precedent for a journey of discovery under such circumstances, and so we went not, postponing the attempt, like philosophers, for a fitting time.

After this, it was not for three Sundays that we had again an opportunity, which we seized less eagerly but still gladly enough. Our vessel was then cruising along the northern side of the gulf, and lying still in a calm. It was a lovely day, brightness being sent from water, hill and countenance to increase that of the sun, which shone in a speckless sky. No dust nor vapor hung over the land—and though the air was cold in the shade, it was hot in the sunshine where it simmered and palpitated. We felt as if new life had been infused into our frames, as sitting astern in the boat which rowed us ashore—a party of three of us, with a native and his wife, who bore a young one in

the hood of her cooltang, we lay back and drank in the glorious prospect. I suppose the world is flatter at or near the poles than elsewhere, and that is one reason why further can there be seen than elsewhere. There was a fine crystalline atmosphere also, which enabled us to look a long way without encountering any obstruction. Up and down the gulf I looked, and across it to its farther shore, where a grey snow-capped range ran parallel—about forty miles away. The different whalers swam in the pellucid waters—those nearest floating double—ship and shadow—those far off decorating the silvery expanse and being decorated with their banners hanging lazily out.

The Esquimau did the steering, he piloting us into a little cove suitable for landing. There we at once jumped ashore upon a small ledge that jutted out into the water—a natural pier. Scrambling over its uneven surface, we soon reached the shore, and from there climbed above upon an elevated ledge situated directly over the short beach, and as we did so, found our feet for the first time upon foreign soil—that is, myself and one friend, the other having been in these parts before and no stranger to foreign lands generally. All around we found to be nude and uninviting. A table-land, somewhat broken by knoll and diversified in its breadth, extended for a mile or two inland, slightly sloping towards a ridge of not very high hills that ran aback of it, whose sides and summits were coated with ice and covered with snow.

No stage nor car drawn by horse or locomotive appearing, we bravely resolved to employ for transit the means with which nature had furnished us—in plain English, to go across the country as pedestrians. For this reason be sure we had occasion to stretch a little our implements of progress, so long confined within the narrow limits of a vessel, and we did too. How curious it seemed to me to walk upon solid ground and not have it heave any. It was, I must confess, slightly embarrassing to have the habit of every now and again calculating on a lurch and not having the ground come to time; it caused more stumbling, this sort of thing, than we would have had on deck under a sharp gale or over a heavy swell.

The first difficulty we had to encounter was one with the native. It was thought necessary, before we could advance, to impress on him our object. We did so. As it turned out it was only a purview we gave him of what we wanted, but we were satisfied by his responses and were contented to follow where he led. Savages are in this respect clear-headed—more so than the civilized. They only associate purposeless wanderings with a deranged intellect. They cannot conceive how any man or company of men can go on and on into solitude, or in fact into any kind of space, without a distinct aim—a specified business in so doing. Positive intention, such as to visit, to hunt, or to fish, alone can rouse

them into action of travel. A vague desire to discover or set eyes on a place one never before saw is to them an hallucination—the phantasma of a dream, and those capable of being made the dupes of such agency they regard as little short of madmen. No use in inquiring or trying to sustain such position with them. Deception, or the plain announcement of some practical idea that they can comprehend, is the only effective resort to reach their judgment, and so secure coöperation from them. Our guide did appear a little puzzled, we noticed, but as we tried to make him subservient to us, we flattered ourselves that we succeeded. He spoke but little English, and that in a very simple, broken style, eking out his deficiency in language by signs, we also adopting his simple way of speaking and of enforcing speech. All four of us then spoke at once, and with such effect that the poor child of nature looked as frightened as a deer in a cage.

Seeing this, I got the others to suppress themselves for a little, while I undertook the business. Raising my right hand I pointed to distance, meaning "over the hills and far away," then pointedly to my comrades and self, then to distance again, signifying, "You see away yonder! We here want you to guide us there!" Now as to what we wanted there, we had to give him some idea, so as to settle his mind upon our pointing object. So I accompanied the gesture by a few simple words he could

understand, "*We want go where heap man is—no white man, Esquimaux man.*" Thus it always is. The most interesting object to man is man. No matter how enchanting the scenery of a country may be, or what attractive or repulsive features may be in its tameness or stern grandeur to man *visiting* there, the subject of most unfailing interest is man *living* there. And this was how I came about to inform him we wanted to visit, in that direction, some Esquimaux settlement or village, if he knew of any such and could thither lead us. He looked queerly at us; at length after a word passed between him and his silent little squaw, he turned round, grunting "*all right!*" and off he went, followed in Indian style by his better half at a sort of dog trot, and by us more dignifiedly. After laughing and chatting and awakening echoes in grim and rugged glens, which seemed ever since creation to have been the dens of ravenous beasts in the abode of desolation, we arrived at the foot of the range of hills before noticed, and proceeded to enter their defiles. Our cicerone seemed familiar with the way, and we implicitly followed his guidance through rough and unbeaten pathways, now passing some precipices of fine confused outline, whose rugged faces frowned down upon us in immobile severity, or whose beetling crags seemed threatening us momentarily with destruction; again moving along the labial edges of an abyss whose sullen gloom appeared as the fit receptacle of woe, or as the brooding

places of curses, or anon skirting the edge of some dread pit whose hidden dangers yawned to engulf our little party in cruel, remorseless oblivion.

At length we came upon an open view on the other side of the range. A wide vale disclosed to us a rural prospect, such as methinks only Greenland could afford. It was some miles in length and breadth, with no appearance of trees and little of herbage. Near the hills was a dark small tarn, on the borders of which sprung a few shrubs and bushes; beyond it, like an embossed map spread the country, exhibiting glen and rounded embankment, hollow and table-land, all studded over with bowlders which looked like sheep lying amid the pasturage. We entered this valley by a gentle declivity, and soon found it to be not much preferable, as far as walking was concerned, to the rough path we had just trod, though not encompassed with dangers like it. We first diverged a little to the left and examined the lake. It was half enclosed by the hills and open to the valley on its southern side. We found it to be deep from the bank, as if it filled a great chasm, and what surprised us more than anything was to see quite a number of what we imagined were fine salmon swimming in its clear waters. Our near approach seemed to be a thing of such unusual occurrence, or else that they were used to such visits without annoyance, that no particular notice was taken of us, but darting this way and that, like silvery bolts

or quicksilver shuttles, through the liquid depths, they only tantalized our appetites, we having nothing with us by which to draw any of them ashore—neither seine nor hook and line. Our pause here was short. We left, in disgust with ourselves, for the mission, taking from its margin a beautiful little flower or two, to be pressed and sent home to *somebody*, and proceeded on our journey to the prospected village, which we wished to make as soon as we could, so as to have a while to spend with its squatters.

Along the way scarcely anything but rock was under our feet or around. We did not, on looking over the valley from the brow of the hill on which we emerged, imagine that it was so uneven as it proved on closer inspection. Hollow and upland succeeded each other rapidly; and stones in every fantastic form stood like sentinels around. I suppose the debris of an old-time glacier had here been dropped. We passed through one rugged glen, to ascend its glazed and grooved side and walk for a short space upon its mural heights, only to descend into another, and zigzag our way among the heaps that strewed its bottom, or scramble over them as best we might. It was as if we were in a volcanic region, similar to the lava-beds where the Modocs stood at bay, not long since, before our troops.

Our guide, whom we rallied upon his guideship in bringing us over such a rough place, and in finding

no smoother road for us to walk in, took our badinage in good part, smiled blandly, and told us, as well as he could, that we were not far from our journey's end. No sign of human life, or of hardly any other, appearing, we wondered, but kept trustingly on our course. It was indeed strange, thought we, that no vestige at all of humanity should appear, and we so close to its abode. As we got up from some cavity, or were just about to descend into one, we peered curiously ahead, searching for some token of the village, not being yet sufficiently posted about the natives, their condition, habits or appliances. We looked for smoke, that sure sign of human habitation, as we thought, but not here is it that

> "The reek o' the cot hung over the plain
> Like a little, wee cloud in the world its lane."

No such symbol was manifest. We only dumbly wondered and hoped. We were now fatigued with our unwonted exercises, and only thought of reaching before long the unknown, previously *undiscovered*, goal, where rest must surely be awaiting. Thoughts of a nice country hotel, fragrant with hay and the odors of mint-juleps, began to loom up in our minds, and jokes about such luxurious caravansary began forthwith to be bandied about. A profuse perspiration and an accompanying thirst likewise suggested the idea of "sherry cobblers." We little imagined what was in store for us where our foot-sore travels tended. The *dénouement*, reader, is almost too pain-

ful to be recounted, but I suppose, as I have brought you thus far along, it would be unwarrantable in me wheeling you to the right about, and not letting you see what proved the finale of it all. If I did, you would never, I am sure, guess that our predicament was as bad as it turned out to be. Oh never! never!

We were in fact beginning to harbor some feelings of discontent with our bear leader, and to cast on him looks to that effect, and askant, when suddenly his simple countenance became illuminated, on coming to the border of another of those troughs more capacious and deeper than any we had yet traversed. A pause, a grunt of satisfaction, a pointing with the finger downward to it, a wiping of perspiration from the brown little face, and an enlargement of the orbits, conveyed to our lagging group the welcome intelligence. We looked in vain for any sign of a native village. Again we looked to our guide for explanation. "*Heap Esquimaux man, no white man,*" quoting my very words at our setting out, and as he said so, without exhibiting any willingness to lead us further, he merely turned his head away and wiped some more of the distilling moisture from his swarthy forehead. We made a rush like that made by the Spaniards, when, for the first time, they beheld the Pacific spread out in calm beauty before them. Down into that sequestered dell went we, three strong, leaving the Esquimau, his spouse and infant son, upon the vantage ground

behind, mutely taking cognizance of our strange infatuation, and ready, I do suppose, for a rush, too, in the contrary direction, on any more alarming signs breaking forth from among us.

"*Golgotha!*" was the name, in muttered indignation and in hearty disappointment, I at once gave to this place. It was a huge open sepulchre filled with human skeletons,—bones and the fragments of bones lying everywhere about. Grinning skulls of low development were strewn around like turnips in a half depleted field. No offensive odors were emitted, as I suppose there had not been long exposure to any of the remains, before they were stripped of their flesh by the foxes and wild dogs. This was a great collapse—the worst I ever had to my aspirations as an explorer, and I hardly relish the idea of parading the fact before the public; but as it is said, "Murder will out," so there are some other secrets, that in like manner press hard for ventilation. This may be mentioned among them. The moral of it to me was, simply, that I was not destined to meet with much success as an original explorer, though that did not hinder me from persevering at the business in many a far off location and strange scene.

I could never learn whether or not the Esquimaux attach any sacredness to this location, like what anciently appertained to the islands of Iona and Lindisferne. It put me in mind of the valley

described in the Arabian Nights, and which later travels seem to resurrect from there as a reality, instead of an oriental fiction where elephants go to their deaths. This people, though very gentle and tractable, have strange ways about them, which precludes the probability of their taking that pains, implied with the deposition of their dead. If one of them becomes very sick and his recovery seems doubtful, they do not trouble him with too much attention. Closing up his eyes, they leave him to die. If the result is convalescence, he will then die of starvation, unless he can make his way out, which weakness might prevent him from doing. It seems hard to believe this of them, but "*the dark places of the earth are the habitations of cruelty;*" so says the infallible authority of God's word upon the subject, and corroboration to it can be clearly seen. The women particularly are soft-eyed, affectionate beings, docile as domestic cats, and as attentive and kind in their own way, to their little offspring, who hang upon their backs or peer over their shoulders, as any mothers could be, and it does form an awful comment upon human nature to think that they could be otherwise so callous. I think it also shows, when we look at this state of things among them, in common with the fearful barbarities practiced by people enjoying a higher civilization, but who, like them, were heathen, that Christianity *is*, if anything more than another, what its Divine founder calls it,

"*a leaven*," working around, often upon even very heterogeneous elements. How much we are indebted to it alone for the "*humanity*" that distinguishes our age and our country!

It did not take so long, I need not say, for me to survey the ground of that little encampment of the dead where hundreds lay, or rather were scattered around, as it has done to tell the whole story with the remarks suffixed. We hastily viewed it, furtively picking up a skull or two, with the intent of enriching some phrenological establishment or museum on our return, and then beat a rapid retreat. Our guide and family were seated quietly, when we reached the top, on the shady side of one of the bowlders so plentiful around, enjoying a lunch of raw seal and hard-tack—the squaw suckling the infant savage. We sat down alongside of them, not however without using considerable of expostulation, in a vocabulary he could not fully understand, for having so victimized us. It was of no use. All we could make out of him was, while he pointed with his digit downward to the Valley of Death, "*Heap Esquimaux man, no white man*," with which assertion we were obliged to become as content as he, and make the best of it.

We took out our lunches, discussed them amply, which we were well able to do, along with some original wit distilled from the fortuitous crop of adventure we had reaped, and copious draughts of water

brought by the guide, in a jar his wife carried along with her baby, which he filled and replenished from a neighboring spring. Afterward we lit our pipes and smoked them, giving some "*tabac*" to both our fellow-travelers, by which they also were enabled to give us the pleasure of seeing them use the fragrant weed becomingly, instead of reversely by chewing it. Then we all together enjoyed a siesta, stretching out in the open air under the warming beams of the sun.

When we awoke the baby savage was crawling over my legs, rattling a residuary bone of our late repast against the empty skull of one of its ancestors, which somehow it, in infantile curiosity, unpacked from the napkin in which it was wrapped. Quickly placing that *memento mori* out of sight, and snatching the dirty little thing up, I reached it over to its natural guardian, who at once sat up, shoving it into her pouch. The party then regaled itself with another application to the weed, and started on its return. In a few more hours, and after one more halt for refreshments, and a rest and smoke by the side of the tarn which we had already curiously inspected, and whose water we now drank of and found delightful, we arrived in port, at the little cove from which we had commenced our peregrinations. The vessel was not distant, and having signaled it, in a short time we saw a boat put off for us.

We got aboard once more, Esquimaux and all—their own boat being in the meantime fast to the ves-

sel, in wait for them—and when we came to calmly review the events of the day, we had no difficulty in complacently coming to the conclusion that, in our brief exploration of the country, we had done it abundant justice, which is in advance of what can be claimed by many other great travelers, after years of hard effort, I dare say.

Here again I present, for the delectation of the reader, a little poem relevantly connected with the excursion of which attempted narration has just been made, though not exactly sprung from it. It is original, the composition of my friend MacGregor, of the Perseverance before alluded to, and if not of very high merit, is interesting to me, and I cannot see but what it may be found interesting to others also. Therefore I give it here. It is in the form of an address to a flower, seen by him growing upon the cornice of a ledge, overlooking the lake I have alluded to above. I do not give the poem complete, as some of it got illegible from being injured by salt water, but the most of it being extant, that I now produce.

TO A FLOWER FOUND ON A ROCK IN GREENLAND.

BY J. McG.

Mild, fragile offspring of a sullen sire
Whose blood flows cold in flights of love or ire,
Who grudged, methinks, the momentary fire
Springing from out a forced and weak desire,
Which lit thy brief existence into bloom,
Who only yields with generous hand a tomb,

Though one, it must be owned, of splendid gloom,
In which decay is made no word of doom:
Thee, when thy mother bore upon her breast,
Wild whirling tempests on her sorely pressed,
And niggard of the store which she possessed,
Although thou wast her darling and her guest,
A scant supply she gave thee of her best.

A crevice of the bare, obdurate rock
Padded with random mould, thou hast awoke
To bloom, and odors breathe, and for a cloak,
Beneath whose folds thou mightest, in quietude mock,
The raging tempests' ocean-stirring shock,
Nothing, except what puniness may claim
From towering greatness, thou affording aim
Too paltry to disturb its passing phlegm,
So far beneath the "shining mark of Fame."

Yet, undiscouraged, thou didst lift thine head
Before the mighty, quiet, and undismayed,
And unambitious, in thy lowly bed
In modesty, content and truth arrayed,
To bounce and self-importance all unwed,
Striving around thy little world to shed
A cheerful peace, save for thy presence, dead.

While yet the snows o'er thee a shroud did fling,
And Boreas, o'er this spot, did hoarsely sing
As if beneath there lay no living thing,
Into thy secret cradle peeped young Spring,
And straight bespoke thee, that thou mightest bring
To him again, hermetically sealed,
Image of thy fair self, to be revealed
Henceforth and henceforth aye, in promise veiled.
Yet poor, wee nursling, trembling, thou so pale,
In every part so delicate and frail,
What need for thee to face the nipping gale,

Before whose bluster sternest natures quail,
Or in encounter sadly sink 'mid wail?
What cause for thee to crave the chary heat
Which keeps thy life saps from a chill retreat,
Infusing strength for them to circulate
Through stamen, frond and calyx, fair and sweet?

Sure none were here, to mark, with raptured gaze,
Thy dainty form swing in these stinting rays,
Or note the censer tiny thou dost raise,
With whiffs of odor fraught upon the breeze—
In lieu of song, the tribute of thy praise.

Within the bounds of this most gruesome place,
Where dangers haunt, and horrors stay their race,
Are no bright eyes to mark the speechless grace
That dwells within and flows from out thy face!
Ah, none are here, in a sweet maze to trace
The streaks vermilion-hued, that there appear
On waxen ground-work delicately fair,
And in surprising loveliness so rare;
Then wherefore, little gem, art thou set there?

I bent mine head the while, to list I strove,
Strange symphonies within, about, did move
Within, about, like whisperings in a grove,
And answer thus a soul-heard rhythm wove.

"There is an eye of universal Love,
That views its purpose from far heights above!
To serve His ends, remote or high, I live,
To render back to Him what I receive.

"On this rude rock of Greenland, I uprear
A standard for the blessings of the year,
And am their outpost in a desert sere,
Hardly within, yet not without their sphere,
Bearing a monosyllable of cheer,

"Even to the uttermost, in dullest ear!
Beauty is mine because His high design
Whose semblance in His works is seen to shine;
His, too, perfection; which is also mine,
On humble platform rising to decline,
And brooded o'er by Providence Divine."

Thus did it speak, though lost in sounding word,
In breathing thought, which finer, deeper stirred,
Routing my quandary as a thing that erred;
And fresher lustre dight within mine eyes,
It seemed to strive in love to make me wise.

And memory of a tale I had been told
Straightway, of my rapt musings, took fast hold.

I saw in desert, stripped by savage band,
A poor lone traveler, mute, despairing, stand,
Thousands of miles from home, from friends, from aid;
Broad wilds and savage lands and oceans spread
Betwixt him and the dear old Scottish hills,
Where strayed his thirsty fancies 'mid cool rills.
Snows melted into living crystal tides,
Tinkling adown their rugged heath-clad sides;
Nought but a sandy waste to feed his gaze,
Under unshaded, beaming noontide rays
That vertically struck his aching head,
And called a prayer forth—that he were dead.

His spirit, which had led him to the spot,
And conquered dangers that might well have wrought
A spell of dread upon a warrior host,
Was sinking, as about to yield the ghost.

In utter helplessness he gazed around,
Until his eyes were fixed upon the ground
Where grew, upon the desert, burnt and bare,
A little flower with comely modest air.

Oh! changed his look, which rapture quick did raise
Into an attitude where all was maze,
And lips about to curse were tipped with praise!
Oh! all the storm about to burst was quelled,
And all its gathered clouds in air dispelled.

Hope flew exulting, ever welcome guest,
To the deserted dove-cote of his breast,
As tho' it were a bird which sought her nest.
Again his courage rose to hero-height,
And ghouls and gnomes of terror took to flight.

"God made me," said the flower to him, "and now
He watches o'er me while I live and grow,
Giving me from His hand each tint and glow,
And all of grace and beauty that I know,
Supplying all my wants with drops of dew,
How can you dream He has forgotten you?"

"And humble offspring of the drear chill North,"
Again I thus addressed
That plant in meekness dressed,
"From thee a similar voice I hear come forth!"

* * * * *

And much I longed, before I took my way,
To bear along some relic of my stay
Beside that tender flower, that grew, alone,
Upon its narrow ledge of greyish stone,
Which gave my musings all their life and tone.

And I did covet for my spoil and prey,
Even the very subject of my lay;
To pluck and bear it with me far away,
Its petals pressed, and all its colors gay
Faintly adumbrated or in decay,
As 'tween the leaves of a closed tome it lay.

Yet could I find no heart in me take
It captive with me—tho' desired keepsake,
For every quivering leaflet seemed awake,
And to protest against the vandal act,
While there it nodded on its bending stalk.

So while between the envy and its fear,
My resolution poor did stick and veer,
I sudden turned and left it to its cheer,
Its lonely cheer in solitude so drear,
And with a smile drove back the rising tear
That wrought between mine eyelids to appear.
And looking back I importuned the breeze to tell,
Ere it again on conscious hearing fell,
To it my lingering last, and fondly sent, Farewell!

CHAPTER VI.

A WHALE.

It was not till a week or two subsequent to the adventures detailed in the last chapter that we were favored with our first *encounter*. Several whales had been at various times visible to us at a distance, and some at closer propinquity, but either their remoteness, or intervention by others, prevented us from coming before now into contact with them.

Our vessel was cruising around the gulf, which as before remarked, is a favorite resort of the whale, at once capacious and sheltered, and abounding in its peculiar diet and chief article of nutriment, "squid;" as before stated, a gelatinous substance composed of animalculæ. One afternoon, when we were so skirting the southern side, some five or six miles off, and while we were all quietly and inertly moving about deck, each performing some little task that did not prevent his thoughts roving o'er far distant scenes, our attention was suddenly and sharply aroused, and an interest awakened at the same moment to what was transpiring around, by a cry for concerted and immediate action. The quick, loud call of the lookout from the masthead, of "*whales on the star-*

board bow!" followed by the stentorian orders of the captain, echoed by the under-officers of "*man the boats!*" acted like a shock of electricity from a galvanic battery upon us. A general arousing and hurry-skurry ensued. Every eye now lit with excitement, while every neck was stretched toward the offing whence proceeded the indications announced. In less time than is now occupied in relation, all were in their several places, awaiting nervously further behest from the powers that were.

It was soon decided, as evidently but a single specimen had appeared, not more than four of our boats—half the complement we had on hand—were to be lowered. In or about the space of two instants more there were in the water three of them, manned by crews from our own men, and commanded respectively by the captain and the two mates—the fourth manned by the natives, and commanded by one of themselves, Old Sugar-loaf. The crew, all told, of the former, i. e., our own men being six in a boat, the crew of the latter, i. e., of the natives, consisting of three men and three women, with a couple of "picaninnies" in the hoods of two of the latter, and a pair of their inseparable companions, the dogs, crouching under the thwarts. It would, I suppose, be strictly correct, instead of using the expression "manned," with regard to this boat of the natives, to say that it was "manned and womaned," but the inaccuracy, particularly as it is acknowledged,

may be condoned—the females among them being equally expert in the management of the oar with the males.

The whale we could plainly see, about four hundred or five hundred yards ahead, and sending up a double *jet d'eau* six or seven feet high, (apparently as much for idle amusement as a smoker of the veteran type,) his puffs of fume, the same curling over and looking like branching horns or the antennæ of a crustacean. The accompaniment of sound we could distinctly hear. It saluted our ears like a challenge to battle delivered by trumpet. Taking that for granted, we were no way loath in acceptance of it, nor did we mean to be tardy in seeking the struggle. We pulled like good fellows. My place was in the boat of the first mate, who was there dignified with the title of captain—every one in command of a boat, in such cases, being so denominated with special reference to his place in the boat.

Reader, we are about to start. This capture, as it shall turn out to be, was a very good representative one to me, and I mean that it shall be so to you also. Spring on board with us! It will be my lookout to see that you at least are safe, come what may of the rest of us. And now we are off! off!! off!!! with just one idea foremost and uppermost—that of swallowing up the intervening space by a gulping muscular action, and getting at once along-

side the dark mass of blubber and whalebone, sportively awaiting us without foresight or dread.

To suppress natural excitation in this grand hunt of the hugest of living creatures, so as to make it entirely subservient instead of riotously leading, is a business first incumbent upon all who would a-whaling go. Circumspection, keen and wary, must be used along with the utmost celerity and promptitude. To be at once silent and swift, reckless and discreet, is urgently imposed in this pursuit. Each boat's crew was inspired by a natural and fostered emulation to get ahead of all others, and all together to have precedence over those ready to compete for possession of the prize from the other vessels, three of which, we noticed, had, about the same time as ourselves, lowered their boats and entered the race with us. Hence, specially, speed had to be called in.

Silence, too, in approaching our quarry was requisite, for its acute sense of hearing had to be guarded against, and as its sight was no less sharp, we had to take our bearings well at the same time; and caution in exposure thus became equally indispensable. So, as if with muffled oars, we sped along, and only the rush of the waters, as we cut through them, was much audible. Its huge proportions, however, gave us great immunities from the chances of being seen or heard—for its bulk, towering over its comparatively little orbits, hid us from observation, while the movement of its great mass in the mobile

waters, excluded minor and more distant disturbances.

Veering slightly round then, to avoid the hazard of our becoming, from the assailants, the assailed, or of our prey escaping by a dive into unfathomed depths, before we could thither send it with proper mandate, having security for its return attached, our boats prudentially neared the unwary victim. Four men besides myself were now bending and stretching their utmost over the oars, while the captain, with head erect and fixed eye, was steering in the chosen course. As steadily renewed as the pulsations of life was the impetus that now sped us onward. On, on our little boat bounded over the corrugated surface like a thing of life, speaking forth in action her unswervable determination, as she made an ever-widening ripple at her prow.

At as nearly the speed of an arrow as we possibly could attain by the tension of every muscle, and as nearly to the stillness of one's flight as practically could be reached with our implements, we tore along.

At length impends the critical juncture, as the command "*Stand up!*" is iterated resolutely by the captain to the man whose duty it is to launch the harpoon into the monster's side—he being selected as an expert for that job, as also for that of steerer as soon as the weapon has been effectually lodged. Promptly his oar, which up to now he has been ply-

ing with the rest of us, is peaked, and he slides forward to a place at the bow. The others continue, with unabated energy, and unfailing exertion. I venture just then to glance around hastily, but not ahead; for such complex motion as that there is no time or opportunity. I observe our own companion boats were hard upon us, but ours has safely the lead. No. 1, commanded by the captain of the vessel, is next to us about half-a-dozen oars'-lengths astern. Next to it, about two oars' lengths further, are the Esquimaux, with the wiry native at the bow, coolly prepared for action, and the two dogs on his left peering over the gunwale, as if taking an intelligent interest in what was going on, and as if about to bounce upon their prey, yet full well knowing better and not barking nor jumping dog-like, but quiet and clearly on business like the rest of us. Our other boat is close up to them, but not abreast, and all are demolishing distance most splendidly. The boats from the other vessels are held well off. There they come, in groups scattering to both sides of us. I can perceive them entering with spirit into the race and pulling with a vengeance, but without the least chance against us. All this of the situation I take in at a glance and feel encouraged by it, yet do not dare to look where my thoughts are most eagerly set, in the direction ahead, to mark what is going on at the bow, or how near we are to the goal, or in what posture the foe now lies. Instead of doing so, I look into

the captain's eye and there attempt to scan reflections of what is transpiring ahead.

The harpooner I am sure has now taken his stand firmly, watching warily, waiting eagerly. He resembles the statue of a gladiator or the central figure of a *tableau vivant.* The coils of rope which are affixed to the braided dart that he holds, are stowed away in two tubs. They lie in the center and at the bottom of the boat. Over two thousand feet of line are in them carefully deposited. It is of the finest manilla fibril, flexible and strong. The running end of it, passing from the tubs below the oars, takes a couple of casts round a stanchion in the stern, called the loggerhead. This enables command of it to be kept while it is being paid out, and will determine our rate of progress while being dragged after him by the colossal fugitive. It then is passed over the oars till it reaches the spot of debouche, a chock in the bow directly in the middle, where a brazen swivel is fixed, with what is called a chock-pin made of hickory wood atop the orifice, to keep the line in place as it is being drawn out.

We proceed again. And now the glittering weapon, formed not unlike an arrow, with spreading barb abruptly terminating on the shaft, is poised in a steady hand, held aloft by a sinewy arm. I can tell that just now his lips are closely set and that his unblinking, eagle eye pierces by anticipation the very spot, growing more and more apparent, where the

strong stroke of incision, the rousing blow is to be made.

At last like the swoop of a hawk, or a flash of lightning from the hand of Jupiter Tonans, it has gone! That instant is heard a precautionary outcry emitted from the compressed lips of our captain: "*Look out!*" Then again: "*Peak your oars!*" The men obey, and while the boat is swirling off, carried past and beyond the danger of contact by its headway and the powerful precipitate stress of the steerer, we suddenly turn round, as if at our ease, though not much so, sweep in our bearings, and prepare to take a needed part in whatever is about to occur.

At once a mighty rush of water is heard and felt. A quick jerk, and we barely shun descent into the locker of David Jones, vulgarly yclept "Davy." Still afloat, however, we judge, almost conjecturing, for our small shell of a boat is in the center of a seething caldron, and it is doubtful to determine whether we are amid the waters or the waters amid us. Into that boiling surge the line is being whisked with sharp, surprising quickness. Out it spins with a whirring sound, like that of the movement of a jenny in a factory. The man who launched the harpoon has, in the short interval, exchanged positions with the captain, who, snatching a lance and standing carefully clear of the running tackle, settles himself forward to await further *dénouement*. Our boat

is now indeed beginning to acknowledge the strength and speed of a rare towage. What a chariot-steed is ours, and in what a full-blown race-course we career!

My mind, with unconscious effort and almost intuitively, reverts to that oldest and most sublime of all poems, secondarily inspired, which I remember well of reading at home and in Sunday-school, where this graphic description is inlaid: "*He maketh the deep to boil like a pot; he maketh the sun like a pot of ointment. He maketh a path to shine after him; one would think the deep to be hoary.*" It is, however, but a mere flash of recollection, distinct but brief. Not much room is there at present for reminiscence or literary excerpt of any kind. Job now has to take a back seat with others less worthy of even that. My attention is absorbed with the all-engrossing pursuit, the first stage of which about ending, the second is about beginning.

Reader, stay yet, we are not over the charms you delight in, where dangers flutter, and strain is called for at every breath!

The man who had so dexterously discharged the missile had, as stated, passed astern, where he has now taken charge of the rope as it is being paid out, at the same time as occasion makes demand, putting a hand to the rudder-oar to preserve or to vary our course. Hence, with reference to this little occupation, in contradistinction to the captain who has relinquished

that place for one of higher importance in the chase and its ending, he is termed the Boat-steerer. His hands wrapped with pieces of canvas to protect them from abrasion, he suffers the line to pass through them, before winding round the loggerhead, and then spinning over the bows, hauling taut or letting loose, or so regulating it as is thought necessary.

As soon as the whale had felt the prick of the harpoon, burying its metal sting through the thick blubber to the quivering flesh, it started with a nervousness one would not be apt gratuitously to attribute to such a large being.

Coming suddenly to know the proximity of its enemy, and to realize that he it was who had thus probed it, seeking its life, the instincts of its nature did not whisper then to it delay for any purpose. That tremor which all wild animals are exposed to by the approach of man—especially on feeling his grip in any way upon them, did not admit of its waiting to take a calm survey of its foe, or to think what best of retaliation was in its power. Immediately it seeks but to turn tail to a danger so desperate, directing its head to the lowermost depths. Lashing the water with its fins and flukes, and grinding it up for a short space, as a steamer may be observed doing with its screw or paddles, before it has obtained a progressive beat, it then descends like a bolt, making in the phosphorescent depths "*a path to shine after it.*" A violent tug at the moment

threatens to draw us under after it, as above a little dramatically described, but the rope is slackened sufficiently, and it slips over the bows pressingly, our boat just lipping the wave and beginning its rapid natation. Gradually tightening it more and more as he can safely, the boat steerer by this means increases our degree of propulsion, yet avoids a strain sudden and strong enough to swamp. This dive of the animal, though seemingly perpendicular, and perhaps rather more so at the start than after the race is fairly under way, generally is of a slant at probably more than an angle of 45 degrees. The speed is prodigious, for great strength, generally held in reserve while in good-natured ease, is now fully inflamed and propelled by rage.

To return to our place in the boats. With what fearful velocity we rush through the water. Never steamer went faster or so fast as we go. The spray from the bows dashes over our heads like a thick curtain—like the Bridal Veil in the Valley of Yo-Semite, or like a thin sheet of water squirting from out a wide slit in one interstice. We are drenched with the briny shower. A breeze seems to have arisen, strong enough to require an extra pull at our head-gear to render them secure from flying off. Every man of us with his knife open, ready in his hand, or in his mouth, if doing something else, watches the uncoiling of the rope, or tries, by smoothing its arrangement in the tubs, to give

facility to its exit and obviate serious danger, or stands prepared to grapple with it should such appear. Close to its embouchure also lies our axe, shiny and keen-sharpened; and the captain, as he stands, as it were, with one eye cast ahead and the other watching the untwining and spinning out of the line, has the weapon within easy reach, in case entanglement calls for the use of it. Most promptly then is it seized, and the line severed at a stroke. This must be dealt from the outside, the gunwale of the boat being employed as a chopping-block. Unless, when the necessity happens, this be done at once, the boat is dragged beneath, and if bunglingly accomplished by cutting it from the inside, lives are endangered, particularly, from where he stands, the captain's own, from the unchecked rebound of the freed end.

But at what rate, coil after coil, it is made to disappear! The eye cannot follow the rapid evolution going on in the tubs; it is like the melting of ice in boiling water, or the spiriting tricks of an Anderson. So rapidly does it pass out that combustion from attrition is imminent. And now, to prevent that catastrophe, water is poured upon the rope in the tubs till it is saturated. It seems as if we were advancing in an ever accompanying dimple, as in the case of the ancient mariner in the silent sea—

> "The waters moving out before
> And closing up behind;"

they seeming to form a hollow on each side of us, and behind us rising above the level of our gunwale. And now swifter than ever! The breeze has increased to a gale, though the only wavelets spreading out upon the glassy surface are from our own skurried motion. The wind is but an impact with the atmosphere and the resistance it offers to our furious volition. Now, however, this high pressure finds relief. Our wild, meteor-like advance ominously sobers. Then it stays, and our headway dies gradually out.

"Haul in!" is now the word fulminated in our ears. It has an infusing energy in it all its own. Now as fast as ever we can, hand over hand, we begin to pull in the immersed line, trying to keep taut upon it, and so draw nigher to our purposed capture when it rises. Every inch we now advance, as we tug at the tightening rope, is a strain of torture to the life hidden from us; but as this is necessary to us for the fatal charge, there is, therefore, no relaxation from humane considerations. Alas, selfishness, always on deck when gain in any bulk is to be hailed, and under hatches only when the gain is trivial or nothing to be acquired! *Tel est la vie!*

It takes a whale three or four minutes fully to complete a respiration, and beneath the surface, longer than about fifteen minutes, it does not usually remain. To the top it then is obliged to return for a fresh supply of oxygen. In its precipitate flight all the

supply needed by it for such long absence from breathing, might not have been inhaled, and a further exhaustion of what it had procured is then enhanced by its impetuous and strenuous effort.

Now our movements came from the very summit of exertion, and were performed with the most minute dexterity. We continued to haul, to pull and to twine or stow away till only a comparatively short elongation remained out, and we knew that now our gigantic "game" was hard at hand. A movement of the waters close by confirmed the anticipation. Unwillingly, with doleful compulsion, feeling himself thus doubly forced into the presence of his foe, the poor creature, whose tremendous bulk did succeed in putting him entirely outside the pale of my pity, began to near his cruel fate. Again we took to our oars, carefully leaving the rope clear while the steersman drew in what was slack of it.

"*Steady!*" was now the word. Up he popped. The steersman now peering sharply ahead, gave his attention to the trend alone. Now for it. "A long pull, a hard pull and a pull all together!" "*Steady again!*" We were now upon him, his huge hulk lying finely extended before us, like the small island Sinbad the sailor got ashore on. Restlessly agitated, he still stretched himself out on the surface, in his dire emergency trying but to get a mouthful of fresh free air, which all surely have a right to. Alas, poor whale, no longer is even that free to him. He has to

pay dearly for it now; nor a mouthful shall he have. I am now an eager watcher of the operations, while my eye-balls are dilated with excitement, banishing all fanciful comparison. My breathing is even suppressed, and my mind is so identified with that of the lancer, that my hand also is elevated with his, holding aloft an imaginary weapon, like him. It is not so many seconds but what they may be counted without an effort. Scarcely fifteen in which our boat is smoothly approaching by its headway—stealthily like a dastard beast of prey—gliding around, up to it like a snake. At almost touching distance we arrive, seeking a mortal part in certainty. Then quick as thought, the captain, standing well braced for the deed, throws his lance at the part in its anatomy well chosen, and by a small line attached to it withdraws it at the next moment, as a boy the ball he throws, having an India-rubber cord affixed. This action he rapidly repeats, once more issuing peremptorily the command, "*Stern all!*" Then shoving in place of pulling, with rapid dip and bending forms, we accomplish the simple manœuver of getting to a respectful distance in time, and no more. The monster's final rage begins now to show. Lashing up the white foam until the sea around looks like a daisy bank, or what it is, a bed of spray or a field of shifting snow, retreat seems more to us "all that fancy could depict" than any advance. Presently blood is seen spouting from his blow holes.

Then it comes on apace in torrents, as well as flowing from the mouths of the wounds, under which he writhes in "his flurry." The sea gradually becomes red, and its foam largely impregnated with crimson globules, until resembling blood itself. The exposed epidermis on which it falls it scalds in a peculiar way, seemingly having the scoriating properties of nettles or of some kind of medusæ. The critical eye of the captain has been employed in scrutiny of the symptoms, and after a word of consultation with the others now coming up, and with the captain of the vessel, he concludes to wait patiently by. Enough has been done. "The flurry," or death struggle, will soon be over. We will then sail in and take the carcass in tow. In the meantime we are taking breath.

And it was with much of the excitement blown off, and with something of the proud calm of triumph nearly obtained and of the satisfaction of securing gain, and yet with a good deal of fluctuating, lively regret, that we had watched his throes. What sublimity appeared as he raised his huge flukes in the air, attempting abortively to make another dive, or as he raised his head to spout, striving for breath through the gurgling tide of blood that kept welling up in such floods, or as he wildly tossed to and fro, blinded by the streams of his own life, frenzied by cruel agonies! How weak were his tormentors compared with him:—Behemoth dying now beneath our tiny hands!

It did seem a long time for us to stand off inactively, gazing at those columns of vital fluid which he threw up, computing the quantity in humble amazement, and coolly making calculation of how many tons of oil his blubber would yield us when we got it cut up and in our caldrons! But the time was only brief, after all. By the captain's chronometer, which he had with him, only a minute or two more than an hour had elapsed from the time we had lowered the boats until "life's fitful fever," as the last term of his existence might meetly be called, was over, and he lay out heaving only in the swell of his late commotion.

By this time all our boats were around in a semicircle, like wolves in a forest, awaiting the extinction of the light. We all closed in as he rolled over on his side, "fin out," as it is called, in sign of death. Fluke ropes were fastened, the capture was signaled to the vessel, and we at once commenced to dig away, with our sharp blubber spades, at the fan-like extremity of the flukes, so as, by getting rid of that superfluity we could expedite its towage through the water. In about half an hour more, by dint of tugging it up to a point, our vessel was able to work down upon us in the slight breath of air that was moving, and I had made my debut as a whale-catcher in company. We had gone in a short time quite a distance, which we measured at random as four miles, having been carried off, most of it, in a somewhat

circuitous course, too, by eager excitement which took no note of its travel, neither reckoning the time occupied as more than as many minutes as it was fives of them.

While taking breath after the exploit, and before we were rejoined by the schooner, I sat wiping the profuse perspiration from my brow, as if to make ready for the laurel wreath that victory might be supposed to bestow, which I felt myself fully entitled to wear, as one of the boat's crew who had done the business. But as nothing of the kind grew in these inhospitable latitudes, it was no wonder I did not receive it, the owners failing to supply any. It must be confessed, I felt somewhat inflated over my share of the success, and dividing in my own mind the honors among five others, I am not precisely sure but what I appropriated more than the fractional quantum strictly fair. As a novice, too, I was liable to error in forming too favorable ideas of whale-catching—the simplicity and security and regularity of the affair—judging from this example. The danger did not appear to me to be nearly so great as I often had had represented. Our boat stood at no time in any extremity. Expedition at the critical moment, such as we had distinguished ourselves by, was, I thought, all that was required, along with strong manly effort and exertion, such as from first to last we had unflaggingly brought to bear.

My more experienced companions, however, re-

duced this flush of confidence, as it has to be termed, and rectified those errors springing from it. I learned from them that this capture was a remarkably "lucky" one, in every respect, and that, mainly owing to the propitious circumstances in which we found it—a fine clear sea, and a brief run to the encounter. It was very seldom, they assured me, that a whale was ever taken in any shorter time, and seldom or ever that a vessel could depend on the same voyage, of getting two or even one more such. In this they all seemed to congratulate themselves, and that they had secured at least one good-sized animal to begin with, considering the augury good for what was to follow. "Counting their chickens before they were hatched," there were some who ventured to prognosticate the quantity of greenbacks New London would see them temporary owners of, on return to port. The first mate's boat's crew which had done the business was in a particular state of jubilation. While all hands felt exhilarated, we, of boat No. 2, felt over and above so, claiming to the prize certain indefinite rights of possession which were held in trust for the rest; but beyond and above the vaporish brag was the substantial or *spiritual* allowance, where all hands should be called aft to "splice the main brace," marine vernacular for "taking grog," this to take place, according to custom, as soon as boarding the schooner.

Meantime, when her sails had been trimmed by

the hands left on her, she was down upon us, and, fastening alongside, we leaped on board. Each man there, as he tossed off his tot, or two of them, as the liquor was immediately dispensed, prepared for work. I went hastily forward and donned some old clothing, and having had a good square meal, such as the steward and cook both knew how to provide for such occasions, I stood in, with all the rest, to the business of "cutting in" and "trying out." The schooner was now "laid to," which means, that she was under such small quantity of sail as was necessary to steady her; and the whale-carcass was safely floating at her starboard side.

The work of thus securing the prize was managed by means of a large cable, termed the "fluke-chain," being passed round the flukes and through an eyelet in its end, forming a running loop. This chain came through what is called the hawse-hole, situated near the deck in the starboard-bow, and made fast beyond to the windlass-bits upon deck, where it had a firm brace against all strain that could be anticipated. The slight forward motion which the vessel still preserved, and the attraction of bodies in the water for each other, before observed, brought the whale close to and parallel with the vessel, its flukes well forward, its head aft. A staging of the simplest construction, for cutting into it in this position, was thereupon put together by the ship's carpenter. A couple of ten inch planks were

run out on each side of the gangway for the distance of about nine or ten feet; another plank of similar size was laid across the ends of the former and securely welted to its place, forming a parallelogram, three of whose sides, those inside toward the cavity, were lined with a low fence overlaid with a counter. The fence was of short stanchions fixed into the margin of the platform, and was calculated strong enough to bear the pressure of men leaning over it. In the open space left betwixt this staging and the vessel the operation of "cutting in" was performed. Here, in the first place, was brought up the neck, on which procedure began.

Standing on this platform and leaning over it, their breasts in contact with the counter, the captain and the two mates set to work, each furnished with a long-handled, well-sharpened spade, cutting into the blubber and loosening it from its lodgment, while the men were employed in hauling it, in storing it away, etc. The back of the whale was first turned up to them for this purpose, the side being assumed in death—hence the expression "fin out," equivalent to its having died. An incision with the keen instruments was then made to the depth of about eighteen inches, as it generally is, or the thickness of the blubber, whatever that may be, the same varying in different specimens, according as they may be full grown or not. This action was repeated as in cutting turf, extending the line across the body six

or eight feet. Then a cut was in like manner made on each side inwards to the vessel, and outwards from the cutters, at right angles to the one already made. These were prolonged, as in the other case, till each line so marked was about four or five feet in length. Then the blubber-hook was inserted in the center of the first line. Immediately, heaving on the windlass commenced, subject to directions from time to time issued by the cutters, as to speed employed, etc. At first the blubber in loosening was rent and torn slightly—this was just in the inception, or until the spades found a clearance for working beneath it. This they came quickly to, and as they shaved it off and separated it along its breadth, the business resembled that of skinning some animal with a tough hide, as I have seen it done, or as sod-raising is sometimes executed. A long roll was unfolded, in length the whole circumference of the carcass; it was called a "blanket-piece." In drawing away this, the purchase power of the windlass afforded facilities for the progress of the work by at the same time turning over the body, until, when the piece was completely unwound the same position was presented, back up, as when the first incision was made. The carcass was loose enough within the noose of the fluke chain to slip around as it was being overset, without causing any twist in the cable holding it. Heaving on the windlass was continuous, except for fortuitous interruption, till a "blan-

ket-piece" of about thirty feet in length was detached from its bed, and contiguous tegument. Then it was cut off, hauled in on deck, and duly deposited in the blubber-room.

Two hooks were alternately employed during these operations—one being ready to fasten on, while the other was about to be unloosened after depositing its load beneath hatches in the blubber-room. These hooks each weighed from two to three hundred pounds, and were attached to what is termed "cutting falls" of heavy tackle, about three inches thick. They led from the windlass aloft, where they passed through blocks made fast in the foretop, thence aft through similar blocks hung from the maintop over the water, and were kept in check by haul-ropes.

Regularly, in this manner, and by these means, the process of denudation went on until the carcass was bared, when it was cast adrift "bald as a coot," to form a trencher-board for ocean's jackals, the sharks and others of its ravenous brood, or a small flesh-mine for such aborigines as cherish a penchant for whale-steak raw or sodden by the sun.

Before committing the remains, however, to such varied and luxurious burial, in the present instance, we cut the head off, and hoisted it on board in pieces. This is generally done the first thing, but we deferred the decapitation till the last for some reason I cannot now specify. This species of whale we captured was,

we find, denominated the Bowhead, and is closely allied to the Right whale, but not in all respects so fully developed. It was supplied, like the latter, pendent from the roof of its mouth, with a sieve for the filtration of its food, composed of lamina of a sort of ossified cartilage, having hirsute appendages which seem to act like feelers to it. This is the article known to commerce as whale-bone, and in a single individual is of as much value as all else to be from it obtained. So as to be hoisted on board, and there manipulated—not phrenologically, but whale-oil logically, as well as whale-bone logically, it was dissected into three parts. The roof, capacious enough to form a sitting-room dormitory for at least three men, if every one of them smoked Havanas and answered to the name of William Tweed or Jonah, was first hoisted and laid upon deck. Then followed the tongue, best described as resembling sausage meat, and termed by the sailors "fat-lean." It did not nearly fill the mouth, and was set away back in that chamber; therefore it had some right to be considered small, even as the moon, our satellite, has to be considered little beside us, the earth; yet from this organ twenty barrels of oil were extracted, which is without doubt a much greater quantity of oleaginous matter than has ever been got out of any other kind of tongue, no matter how oily; though there is something in which, however, the whale tongue is inferior to that of others I have encountered

among men and women,—namely, its inability to spread its oil well over a smooth surface—this, whales are not experts in doing with their *linguæ*, not having linguistic powers, I suppose. All the oil got from their tongues is had after these are being cut up, while reversely those others alluded to, let their oil ooze out most abundantly when cutting up. But here I find I am digressing. The lower jaw was the third piece elevated—the oil extracted from its blubber being considerable, and the bone having usufruct as sledge runners for the natives, though not as much else. There was also in the upper jaw a good deal of blubber, which was cut out, while with short-handled steel spades, made for the purpose, a couple of men were employed under its arch prying out the layers of bone, scraping it clean, and shoving it out to others who bore it away to final stowage. This separation of whalebone from its setting is perhaps the lightest and most rapidly accomplished of all the labor to be done about a whale—though stabling and grooming is absolutely nothing—the small bulk occupied by the article forming another of its invaluable properties in transit, and being another recommendation for whale-jaw, that is, of the *upper story*.

All being now got trimly aboard, we prepared at more leisure, and yet with full steam of business on, to finish our work by "trying out." This process occupied the better part of a week. The next day

after getting rid of the carcass we began. Into the blubber-room, accordingly, a couple of men descended armed with short, sharp spades and hooks, the former somewhat similar to those used for prying out the lamina of the mouth, now used in place of knives for cutting up the blanket pieces into short cakes of about two feet in length by about one in breadth; the latter in place of pitchforks, by which to push and raise the slices on deck, handing them to the man who fed the mincing machine. There they were, chopped as they were, laid in position for the guillotine-like blade, with the cuticle downwards into thin shives; the common tegument of the surface which is not cut, holding them strung together, while thus segregated.

Two huge caldrons which had been built into brick arches on deck, a little for'ard of midships, were then called into requisition. Under them a fire was kindled with some wood fuel. Into them we cast forthwith the minced sections. Here, as the intervening fatty matter was melted by the heat, the oily secretions were drained from their cellular tissues, and baled into a copper cooler conveniently by. From this it was run off by a faucet into casks. These were then, when filled, closed up and lowered into the hold by tackle purchase, piled away in tiers, furnishing without more ado the article of whale-oil as brought to market.

After the first caldron-full of blubber had been

thus "tried out," no more wood was required for fuel—the scraps, or chips forming the refuse, affording an abundant supply of combustible substance, that from one being more than sufficient in "trying out" another. No sooner did "chips" come so into use, than they were found serviceable in other corresponding ways. Our ebony master-spirit of cookery found them very ready to ignite, and often, under his pots in the galley, they were heard to crackle like "the laughter of fools," and to blaze like "the light of other days." The natives from of old, knowing their value in this respect, might have been expected to put in a requisition for some to expedite their culinary practice, but with rare forbearance which cannot be too much lauded, they did not, preferring to eat their meat in an uncooked and even unseasoned condition, to making any decrease in our supplies. Dear, kindly, considerate creatures, what example do ye set Christians, or those so calling themselves in this? Who among them hesitates from fear of lessening his neighbor's stores? Just one, for general. It is he who needs advice badly, but wants it not thoughtfully on this account. Ah, good fellow, where shall I look for thee?

On measurement of the oil from this whale being at last obtained, when it was all stowed away, we found that it amounted to the enormous quantity of one hundred and fifty-five barrels, making nearly twenty tons. And I have heard experienced whale-

men aver that the oil and bone together from a specimen, is about one-quarter weight of the whole body.

There is one thing more that I want to make a clean breast of here, and at the same time do so in a quiet way to prevent it getting too much bruited abroad. It is that though as a whole we *did* turn the carcass adrift to be devoured by prowlers and sharks, etc., and to be farther economized by the natives as a store-house for meat to themselves and their dogs, yet being badly pressed for fresh meat at the time ourselves, we did cut a small portion of steak from the shoulder for our own use, having the same excuse to offer for so doing, that the poor girl had to her mistress when severely questioned: "Please, ma'am, it was very little." We found it not bad eating, after all, and though I do not want to have myself quoted as an authority for whale-steak, like some of those Parisian savants for horse flesh, yet, I will say like an honest man, for I am in the place where I am demanded by conscience to speak the truth, and the truth I speak, impugn it whoso list. *Whale steak is good at a pinch.* Its strong oleaginous flavor is *not there;* nor is it, as popularly supposed, fishy one bit. Coarser in grain and darker in color than beefsteak, it is proportionally coarser to the taste, without being offensive, and I ate a piece that was as tender as is generally to be had in boarding-houses. One of my mess-mates ate a surfeit of it, and as a consequence had a kind of night-mare on him, in which he per-

petrated the following. I present it as a curiosity, recapitulating the scene of capture somewhat similarly as above. The poet who wrote it, was, he said himself, not much of a poet, but, as he was a whaler, his production may come recommended on that account to my readers as to me.

LINES ON THE CAPTURE OF A WHALE.

By a Whaler but no Poet.

Hark! As the sun from his liquid couch rises,
  And o'er the blue waters a yellow blaze throws,
Aloft from the mast-head the loud stirring cry is
  "A whale on the lee-beam, see where he blows!"
"Come now, all hands on deck! Larboard and Starboard men!"
  "Main-yard, aback!" "The boats lower away!"
Hard on our lee-beam, mark how the waters gleam,
  Surging and sparkling as frosted with spray.

See the leviathan, sporting in giant might,
  Finding the sea a luxurious bed,
O'er him the sea-birds, collected in circling flight,
  Watching the billows that wreathe his huge head!
High his dark flukes are raised, widely they cleave the air
  As o'er the surface he shakes them amain,
Then dips he in hoary flood, free from all grief or care.
  "Peak now our oars for his rising again!"

Ah, not a hint of ill yet has he taken,
  Diving for pleasure he soon will be up,
When the glistening harpoon too late may awaken
  His cloudy perceptions to death in his cup,
But quaffs he potations, this morning, of joy,
  Dreaming not brief is his season of bliss
To gurgle the brine or to linger and trifle
  With whale-cow beloved, or wildly to race.

There he is! Give your blood free circulation,
  Fear not to bathe in hot rivulets of sweat,
Bend hearties, bend, for the prides of creation,
  The Sweethearts you left and fondly shall meet.
Our boats! See them fly! Each a quick darting lance,
  Or shadow that fleets o'er a daisy-capped lee,
Stand up! Give it sharply and both barbs at once,
  "Stern all!"—"Trim the boat!" Steady! Keep clear!

The stab he now feels! Fin and flukes in commotion,
  And "blackskin" and oars enveloped in spray
Attesting the fear of this monarch of ocean
  At touch of our iron—our grip of dismay.
Peak your oars deftly! Ho, steady! Keep clear!
  While spins out the tackle and swift speeds the boat,
Ho swifter and swifter our headlong career,
  Till our steed to a pause for more breathing is brought.

Haul in the line! Quick! Haul it in all you can!
  Now lances and spades from your thwarts clear away,
And now to your oars, when everyone prove a man
  Just for a little to hold him in play.
Let the lance fly once again as we steal close up.
  Quickly astern all! Push for your lives!
There mark the jets that he ragingly throws up,
  And reckon proportion of blood that he gives.

Round him his foes are set, still his vast strength unspent,
  Once more his great flukes flourish in air,
A lance in his heart at length gives his life's currents vent,
  "*Fin out*" he then turns to die in despair.
When loud ring huzzahs from each victor beside,
  Rejoicing that peril from him is no more,
And up goes the sign o'er the yet panting tide
  "The triumph is ours!" The contest is o'er.

CHAPTER VII.

FROZEN IN.

THE arctic summer now rapidly drew to a close, and we did not then anticipate, nor were we favored, after the event above detailed, with any more cetaceous interviewers that season. Whence they go and in what conditions they hibernate are questions long mooted yet unsolved. There may be places known to them where the constant commotion of the waters, caused by rapid streams or counter currents, keeps ice from forming on the surface and thus affords them clear opportunity "to blow." These they may frequent in ice-blocked security from invaders, luxuriating on the fat things of the deep, growing as if for their especial benefit; then, when the long day of summer has dawned, they may give choice to smoother waters, on which to enjoy company and bring up their young. Or it may be that an open polar sea, so long speculated upon by savants and discussed by men of practical knowledge, and not yet demonstrated nor disproved, offers to them a winter habitat stocked with plenty, where in uncontrolled freedom they range with bracing cold arctic air at will. Or it may be that like some animals, bears for instance, though

hardly true, I think, of the polar variety, they pass in dormancy a portion of their period of absence from their summer haunts, protected from a deadly attack of cold by the thick matting of adiposity and oleagine in which their frames are enveloped, though this idea can hardly be entertained on any good ground except that of newness, which is an excellent set-off towards establishing its probability in the eyes of some, I know; but from the good condition in which they come forth in spring, I will not myself maintain too stoutly the correctness of this hypothesis. Be all these different suppositions as they may be, however, it is fact, uncontrovertible and unassailable, that toward the end of October, or at furthest the beginning of November, they are gone from the fond notice of whalers,

> "Like the dew on the mountain,
> Like the foam on the river,
> Like the bubble on the fountain,"
> But no!—not forever!

leaving in the trackless deep no trace behind.

In answer to the secret premonitions of Nature, presumably whispered in their ears, they accordingly left Cumberland Gulf that season, a little later than sometimes they do, in the beginning of November. About the ninth of that month, not one of them was to be seen by any of our vessels, so reported; and we then conjointly prepared to go into winter quarters.

Just then anxiety was pressed upon us, with regard to what seemed to threaten miscarriage to our enterprise. We had not contemplated this before, but as soon as we did we began brooding despondingly enough over our situation. It was briefly this: A tender which we had surely depended on as having sailed very shortly after us from New London, though long due, had not yet arrived, and we knew that soon she would be precluded from reaching us by the ice. The stores she was to bring us, we relied on as provision for the winter. The empty casks, etc., she was to carry along, we reckoned upon as necessary furnishing for cargo we proposed having next season. Without all these we could not foresee how we could get along. Hence then our sudden embroilment in solicitude and despondency.

The company who owned our vessel, had here a station, in charge of a man who had formerly been in their employment as a petty officer, and who had lost one arm in their service. Boats, sledges, coal and some provisions, along with a number of natives and their dogs, were here at slight expense maintained, or held in connection. These, subject to draft or conscription for the different vessels of the line, according as requirements from them arose, formed a small settlement in a state of dubious formation, little more than the nucleus of what is called, on the coast of Asia and Africa, where Europeans have establishments for trade, a Factory. To it more or less every

season, they are in the habit of making consignment of large supplies. For this purpose a tender was customarily freighted by them, which, disgorging her whole material, and loading up as expeditiously as practicable with whatever of cargo the others had on hand, was then supposed to thread her way out before the ice had effectually closed in, leaving the others to spend the winter on the grounds, where in the early part of next season, before any ships could get through, they would have good opportunity to fill up again, and, unless intercepted by another tender with fresh orders, return to port as soon as their cargo was made up.

On the present occasion, the barque "*Oddfellow*," commanded by Captain Buddington, afterward of "*Polaris*" distinction, was looked for. The brig "*Isabella*" was the only one of our vessels besides our own now on the coast. She as well as we were expectant of the arrival of the "*Oddfellow*." She had sailed about the same time as we, and had got into the gulf only a day or two ahead of us. Her stores were in every way deficient, though we were pretty well fixed in all else except in a supply of fuel; but this was one of the greatest essentials to existence during the coming winter, when some days the cold might be expected to be so intense as to hinder us from getting out doors even, and we had moreover, come out without our full complement of casks. With the crew of the "*Isabella*," we compared notes,

and clearly saw that something serious must be portended by the non-arrival. Still we kept anxiously peering into the offing for some sign of the "*Oddfellow*," until convinced that there was no use in doing so, and even after that. We were then forced to turn around and survey our situation as deprived of all help from outside. What should we do in it? Should we seek help of the other whalers? Or should we make up our minds to live as nearly like the Esquimaux as possible, and with snow-hut shelter, as the best adapted to the circumstances, use oil and blubber for fuel, and seal's flesh and walrus meat for food, to eke out the scanty provisions, which we would share in common till the distant spring—saving as much as possible for then? These important questions presented themselves before us, from a whispered inception to fully pronounced quandaries. Resolutions anent them were about being adopted, when lo! after the eleventh hour, we were most agreeably surprised by an appearance like that of a steamer in the distance heading right toward us. Nearer and nearer it came, until beyond surmise a steamer it proved to be. She was not long in fetching up alongside, and we learned from her commander, who turned out to be none other than the redoubtable Captain Buddington, that the "*Oddfellow*," which had started punctually as was appointed, had foundered in a storm off the coast of Newfoundland, but that all hands had got safely on shore; when, im-

pressed by an urgent sense of duty in view of our dilemma, he had at once, on making his way to St. Johns, there chartered a steamer, freighted her with coal, and what else was by us most needed, and promptly prosecuted the voyage for our relief.

This was all, to say the least, exceedingly opportune, and we felt greatly grateful to the one who had proved so equal to the emergency which we had seen before us. As fast as we could, we accomplished the transfer of the steamer's cargo to our vessels, and as we had no time for the removal of what cargo we had acquired—not yet quite ready either, and as our consort had nothing of the kind as yet, the exit of the steamer was equally abrupt with her entrance. In two days she was off and away again; and we, well satisfied, sought the anchoring ground, where we expected soon to be so fixed as to be in no danger of parting our cables or dragging our anchors. This we came to, off the island of Nyattic, in the same little cove we first cast anchor in, on our arrival in the gulf. It was only a few miles in area, but steep and sheltering, and our anchoring ground was on the southern side of the island. The mainland was only about half a dozen miles from us, and we could plainly discern a rugged range of hills along its coast-line, stretching off inland, beyond the head of the gulf, till lost in the perspective.

There in brief time were convened, besides our schooner and consort, the schooners "*Quickstep*"

and "*Erie*," of New London, Ct., the latter commanded by Captain Tyson, likewise known subsequently to fame in conjunction with Buddington in the ill-fated "*Polaris*," also the schooner "*Atlantic*" of St. John's, N. F., the barque "*Millwood*" of New Bedford, Mass., along with two Scotch barques, the "*Kate*" of Aberdeen, and the "*Perseverance*" of Peterhead. These all anchoring closely together, the one astern of the other under the lee of the rough and craggy steep whose trend was from east to west, began at once making ready for the advent of winter.

With timber we had brought along for the purpose, we immediately set to work, all bearing a hand, under the supervision and direction of the officers and ship's carpenter, in housing the deck from the mainmast aft. This was a brisk but not difficult task. The boards and braces were all marked ready for right disposal, and all we had to do was to bear them up, slap them together and nail them tight. So, before the great luminary, whose beneficent course we had erewhile oft marked with stupid indifference begot of familiarity, had taken his last peep at us, we were snugly ensconced, thinking ourselves, as we really were, fully competent to meet whatever arctic rigors might be in store.

With what rapidity the days had closed upon us, getting shorter and shorter until total extinction of them had been wrought, while we ambidexterously plied our labors to get ahead of the last resultance.

It took us over a week ere we had finished. Then only a few days elapsed, and the murky disc of the sun, after performing a curvature on the horizon in a manner that to us seemed like a farewell wave, sank to rise no more upon our sight for a wearily protracted period of nearly half a year. Simultaneously with his disappearance, or rather a little preceding it, the ice formed around us, and a heavy fall and drift of snow enwrapt the wide plain of waters through which we had just plowed our way. The ice had formed in a night, and the next morning we found it strong enough to bear us upon it. And after the snow had fallen, we got out upon it with shovels and did a good day's work, piling it up around the vessel, packing it closely, and by that means completely excluding the frost and the air from ingress through any seam or chink in her sides, which dry cold might originate or enlarge.

Five stoves had been rigged on board, and were at once set agoing full blast. Number one was in the cabin and for the officers; number two was in the steerage for accommodation of the boatsteerers, petty officers; number three was on the main deck under cover of the shed we had erected; number four was in the galley, between decks, under roof also; and number five was in the forecastle, where Jack and his mess-mates and their visitors assembled most commonly.

As soon as everything got set to rights, the whole

ship's company were served with an invitation aft for an interview with his high mightiness, the captain, whose authority, like that of the sun, was about to pass or had already passed into a lengthy shade; though not similarly to his to disappear entirely from our mortal view for the period. We met him under cover on deck. He then and there delivered unto us his humble auditory an address, short, but by far the longest winded I ever heard him utter. It was made, like those of the ci-devant President Grant, entirely without notes. None were present either to take any, but I most distinctly remember almost every word of that superlative oration as it was spoken. The following may be taken as it, *verbatim et literatim:*

"Well men! Ahem! Now men! Here you are with nought more ado, but make yourselves as comfortable and contented as you can for the winter; but as I want to see you come out of it in the spring fresh and hearty and ready to go to work, and not all crippled up, sick with scurvy, or rheumatism, or hay fever, or some infernal trouble, hang it all, you must keep out of your bunks as much as possible. As often as the weather permits, find out-door exercise for yourselves. Eat as much fresh meat as you can get, whenever or however you can lay hands on it, on board or on shore, waiving ceremony in a free country where there are no game laws to interfere or any other law for that matter, except what

you see before you. Be as regular in your habits as if you had your time marked out by the sun instead of by the bell or by the stars. Knock around and try and get heat into you by fighting the cold instead of by hugging up the stoves. See you keep as clean as you can by washing every day, and by changing your underclothing as often as necessary. Keep up your spirits by free intercourse with all here. That's all! I thought I should say something! There now! you can go!"

After which burst of stirring eloquence, filling his mouth with a goodly sized quid of the best Virginia, the old sea-dog turned abruptly his back, leaving us to our comments and to ruminate over his sound advices—troubling us little with any more counsel for the next five months.

Abundance was on board, and abundance was dispensed. Our regular meals, as served out to us by the steward, were now restricted to two *per diem*, but these were not designed to form limits in the exercise of our digestive abilities. "Salt-horse," tea, coffee, sugar, flour, with other superfluities, were supplied us, *ad libitum*, along with plenty of cooking utensils in which to reduce these raw materials into the form of Christian food. And as we had a stove, and unrestricted quantities of coal to feed it with, there was nothing to hinder us from all night long, including "the daytime," pursuing culinary avocations for the benefit of ourselves and our visitors, if so disposed.

Our company was considerably improved, it must be admitted, by the closer relations our better accommodations and the frozen surface secured for us, with female society, as well as with our comrades from the other vessels. From neither had we been debarred quite since our entrance into the gulf, but there was this difference now to be noted; it had been before somewhat fortuitous and uncertain, whereas now this intercourse with them all was fixed as a certainty, and devotedly followed as a business which we had solely to attend to. It was now seldom, in our quarters, that we were without both classes as visitors, with to the former, and the more entrancing—as female society always is, even if it is among savages—hangers-on in the shape of little, good-natured, easy-going, or carping, jealous-minded male relations not nearly so desirable. The Esquimaux women or "coonies," as in their lingo they are called, proving for such a chill climate wonderfully warm and affectionate, were now continually at our sides, vouchsafing help to us in making or drinking our tea and coffee, and in lessening our stores of tobacco and molasses, both of which they were very fond of. They liked our company uncommonly well, only a little more than we theirs, I thought, and it was truly astonishing to mark what sunshine, in the absence of solar effulgence, the bright little creatures managed to disseminate among us from their small, dark, flashing eyes in that long win-

ter's night, which, but for them, would have been longer still or darker. Made up of sparkle and laughter, they much more resembled the play and ripple of gleaming fountains in the far South, I imagined, than the cold, stagnant glare of frozen icicles in the far North, where they were. Poor things! What a happy people they seemed to be among us, and how ready to share all around the happiness they enjoyed! Did they have a fine fat seal, just killed, the sailors must have a share. Did they know where a bear was to be shot, the sailors must come along. Did they find any of us wanting a sister's, or a mother's, or a wife's hand in mending, they were always ready to lend theirs instead. In fact, both men and women formed a community of rare agreeability, though they were savages.

Our friends from the other vessels did not visit us, without having us to repay the obligation their visit imposed. Our mutual visits indeed, though not meted in their frequency, or style, by any laws of etiquette, nor tallied in any way so as to be brought within the bounds of exact balancing, or of any kind of numeration, were just as frequent as if that good feeling, which forms such groundwork to the movements of refined society, were existing among us. We always went where we felt like going, and held our receptions with the ditto, ditto, of the kindly welcome with which we were received.

In somewhat similar fashion as ours, the other

vessels of the fleet were all covered in, some of them in superior style. The barque "*Perseverance*," of Peterhead, gave of this an example, *par excellence*. A much larger vessel than ours, she was housed over half her length. Her area of the covered portion of her deck, being much more extensive than that of any other, afforded to the combined squadron a splendid hall for all purposes of entertainment. Her raised quarter-deck making a grand stage and proscenium, with the lower level of the deck for auditorium, she furnished special attractions for our wandering footsteps, as we slid over the congealed surface in search of sociality, or of amusement. Song, dance, recitation, fencing or improvised play of any kind found there a fit theatre, and an applauding audience from a motley throng, of over two hundred that were coming and going, as suited them. Here was the little "centre," or "'change," or "court-house steps," of our community. In it services were held on Sunday, as well as prayer-meetings through the week. In it too, our little theatricals, balls, and merry meetings were held, on festive occasions with special *éclat*. And serious lectures, nigger minstrel shows, and debating clubs followed each other on its boards in varying rotation. We soon fell into the rut, in which things rolled along all winter. Though far from what customarily would be considered life, we were still further from what could be construed as *ennui*. A lively stir was continuously maintained

among us, very conducive both to physical and mental health—"*mens sana in corpore sano.*"

Among our mixed assemblage there was great variety of character, including some rare specimens of the *genus homo*, seldom so abundantly grouped together outside a seminary of learning or a state's-prison. Let me attempt to give some description of them as they appear to me naturally clustered at this distance of time in which I am now writing.

The first class that so stands out before me were men who, though rough and uncouth in their manners, and primitive in their notions, held commendable traits of spirit, and were on these accounts mainly, interesting studies. They showed human nature, under an ungainly covering and rough hard crust, to be just as tender and noble and companionable, in many ways, as can be anywhere seen; these in odd turns and idiosyncrasies very entertaining. Though conforming to a general type where continual abrasion with each other had rubbed off the jutting corners, they exhibited obviously all that abounding individuality, so characteristic of the untutored. These from early boyhood had been trained to the sea, and knew no other home than was to be had upon her heaving breast, except indeed, by the brief glimpses which the interlapses conjoined to it afforded, embracing a fortnight or so on land, after having been paid off, and before getting shipped again. To them all the world was but a huge whal-

ing-ship, and all the men and women in it merely hands or accessories aboard, those unacquainted with the duties of sailing just so far deficient in requisite *nous* for anything, and at best but land-lubbers. To fall into conversation with one of this class, was often quite a treat in its way, giving one frequently new views of existence, charming as quaint; and it generally resulted, according to my experience, in also getting tripped up badly. My knowledge, such as it was, was of an entirely different kind and hue from theirs, and as the information of any account they did possess was practical, they could always on board ship display that to advantage, and I may add too, with quiet self-satisfaction, peculiar to the self-educated man of action. For instance: did we converse of a brewing storm? It was but as a child listening to the keen wisdom of a sage, having signs pointed out to him, occult otherwise, that I could maintain my place outside of the shallows of talk. Did we talk of the management of a vessel in a gale or tempest off a rocky coast? Here again, I speedily found myself among the breakers of a lee-shore, with a master hand at the helm, but that hand not mine, or I caught myself, perchance, floundering high and dry upon the exposed beach of my own ignorance. Or, did the conversation happen to turn upon marine phenomena or natural appearances, not distinctly marine, there again I found myself looked down upon from a pinnacle as it were, while the supernatural,

the weird, the grotesque, the fabulous, were hauled in by my interlocutor in very pity, for my enlightenment, and tales of witchcraft, mermaids, wraiths and spectral omens, precluded my feeble efforts at introducing the school-room philosophy of cause and effect.

A second class rising before me were those who, from one cause or another, had for a living assumed the profession of seamen, and from choice, independent of accident. As a general rule these men were of some intelligence, had a resolution to improve their condition, and not destitute of some ability to bring the resolution to the front. More or less warped in mind and judgment, they were nevertheless shrewd, observing and quite adaptable. Though knotty tars, men of action more than of words, and wanting in refinement, they made very good messmates. The *why* and the *wherefore* were, to their partially schooled minds, riddles demanding some degree of scientific or rational explanation. With some of the cobweb superstitions of the "old salt" clinging about the angular recesses of their beings, these had an "educational turn," a docility and an equipoise that enabled them to chime in with the others just mentioned, yet that could permit them to indulge in a quiet laugh at their credulity, and at the ludicrousness of the stories vented by them. Learning from the former much of their seamanship, and at the same time acquiring from

higher sources corrective light on the general subject, these came at once to respect and to despise the odd old fogies.

A third class was composed of those who, probably later in life than the period of adolescence, when men are supposed to have power and judgment to choose their own ways, may have been thrust *nolens volens* from the land, to become "toilers of the sea," and who had seized the avocation of seamen as one immersed would a plank floating handily. Intemperance it might have been, with its accompanying vices, by name "*legion*," possibly crime and owlish habits, had first driven them from a stationary point in society and cast them adrift in the world, without friends, or the capacity for making them, *minus* money or reputation or credit hanging on the latter, homeless and houseless vagabonds. Finding in this line of life a door open for them, and forthwith entering by it, they brought with them but dark memories, shrouded over by a steely reticence, and but scant gleam of higher intelligence than their surroundings eliminated to brighten their course. From this class, except the regular toil, not much could be had, though it was present to me always, while obliged to associate with them, that something was oft in danger of being lost by them. "A wide berth" was, I felt, most of what one could safely afford to offer them unmeasuredly.

Still another class remains for my notice, to com-

plete the list of classification according as it appears to me. They were those who, drawn by a roving disposition, and a love for adventure, sought indulgence of both these propensities by a voyage to the arctic regions in quest of whales. The last class appears to me also in two sub-divisions, with greater variety in character and circumstance than belonged to the others. The first one consisted of young men whose previous surroundings had been those of refinement and luxury even. Struck by a wild offshoot from Fancy, while wandering mayhap in her parterres, *perusing* with glowing interest, books where "the lives of great men all remind us," etc., or others which the questionable genius of a "Ned Buntline," or a Sylvanus Cobb gave birth to, they had, in this enterprise, sought to realize their day-dreams—about the most difficult manner of attaining their proposed end which they could have adopted. These met with a hard struggle before getting toned down to their rude surroundings—eating raw pork, turning into close and woody pallets, turning out at all hours, and the other thousand ills that flesh, "choosing a life on the rolling deep," is heir to. And it was not without many a wistful, backward gaze, such as erewhile the chosen people tendered the flesh-pots of Egypt, that these runaways acquired anything like accustomance to their new-fitting, or rather non-fitting, duties.

The other subdivision in this last general category

were those who, as I did, left comfortable enough quarters, very likely, because having imbibed a taste for adventure, or having got already inured to manly hardships, in the tented field or elsewhere, still they sought the coy nymph of high enjoyment, in testing difficulties in other phases of their manifestation, or in conquering adversity in new fields, where excitement could be hailed and honor purchased by daring. Among this coterie were to be descried the rough and ready, "with a mind for any fate," the happy-go-lucky dog, whose mind was firmly set in the idea conveyed by the aphorism which has come to us from divine lips: "*Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.*" These never hung a rag out for a parley with Fortune, so long as a crust and a kick was to be had from the jade, counting themselves lucky in at odd times securing the former without the accompaniment of the latter, the chorus of whose psalm of life seemed ever from Hudibras:

> "Enjoy the moments while you may,
> Old Time is still a-flying,
> The fairest flowers which bloom to-day
> To-morrow may be dying."

Here were to be found your true rollicking blades, your genuine modern Epicureans, with nought about them either of the heavy Panza, or of the lean Cassius, excursion yachts, whose rattlin' was light and airy, whose sails were trim and jaunty, no matter what thick clouds were massing windward. With

first-class digestion, these were not satisfied with snuffing up the east wind for nutriment, nor did they brood over what troubles came to them for comfort. In the words of the old Scottish song, they were,

> "Contented wi' little, and canty wi' mair,
> When e'er they forgathered wi' sorrow or care,
> They gied them a skelp, as they hirpled alang;
> Wi' a cog o' guid swats or an auld fashioned sang."

Light-hearted, supple-jointed, clear-voiced, a general good time, a dance, a song came always, each or all, in excellent time to them, except when sleeping perhaps, and even then, I do suppose in dreams they were mostly so engaged.

The Scotch barques were pretty well supplied with lads answering to this description—some particularly fine singers being among them. Our own American vessels had also their share of them on board. And though not one of the most distinguished of the set myself, I never failed to do my best in making a noise among them, which is as good as making claim to be a musician of the Chinese order, I reckon; nor was I inclined to let any of them ahead, in the out-of-door sports, which were promptly inaugurated by "the boys" on the ice. There a large gymnasium was erected, consisting of cross pieces of timber, with ropes, rings, etc., attached, dumb bells, and heavy weights, spring-boards with snow for saw-dust, and all the rest of the paraphernalia, as complete as we could have

them, and immensely up to our wishes. Here we held, as often as the weather permitted, a regular saturnalia, where boxing gloves, tight-fitting sealskins, etc., were called into use, and all who were alive to lively sport bore a hand at something or other, to the great delight of the "coonies," whose shrill trebles of applause did lend additional ardor to our exertions. Base-ball clubs were also organized. Of one of them I happened to get elected captain. They were conducted according to the American rules of the game—the Scotsmen putting themselves under tuition of us, and soon becoming as enthusiastic in bowling, batting, and basing, as we were. A rare sight it was, to see us out in the ice, in that desolate region, scattering after the ball, and running the rounds with awful vim if with less speed, and with no danger from sunstroke. So wrapt up in our surroundings of sealskin, and in our top-boots of deerskin, it was no easy matter for us to do credit to this athletic pastime or to ourselves in giving it interpretation, but I do think, taking everything into consideration, the game was played as well at an average among us, as it could have been anywhere else, if the players had been hampered as much as we were with extra wrapping, slippery ground and clogging snow. Nor could we see the ball at all times quite so readily as if we had the sunlight to enable us so to do. The light we had was similar in intensity or rather dullness, to what is emitted by a full moon in

a frosty night, at hours when the Northern Lights are playing softly overhead. This gives a pretty correct conception of the meridian lustre there at that time of the year.

Skating also was resorted to by a few amateurs. Rinks were temporarily cleared for that purpose with shovel and broom, and a few vivacious performers might then be seen speeding back and forth on their missions of delight and gracefulness, their glow, little damped apparently by the absence of bright eyes to admire their artistic gyrations, and their wonderful feats of balancing. Yes! I have seen some answering to that description, occasionally looking on, but whether beaming on the scene in discreet beauty, like *diamond solitaire*, or attended by their satellite dons, they did not express much fervency at the evolutions performed, nor did they consequently beget any surpassing exertions in the skaters. Graceful and agile in all their own motions, the little savages did not express unwonted surprise at seeing the like in others.

And the game of tag—that ancient game of tag—was there again revived, and pursued with even more than the usual school-boy glee, upon these frozen waters; at times with such silvery brilliance lit up by the Aurora Borealis, which, like umbrella-ribs in the vast dome above, spread out, ran together, shifted places and resumed them again, and again. There was no mistake but what we much missed the light of the

sun, but we certainly had a grand compensation for it. The soft and mellow radiance now, in good weather, showered down upon us, as if from a spiritual atmosphere, had no particular source, and fell on no particular spot more than upon the whole wide expanse beneath. How every object around, the big hill back of us, now no longer an island, the people on the ice, the ships, the dogs and the whole broad landscape had their outlines smoothed and quieted by it. It seemed as if all coming within the scope of an observation lay but on the boundary-line of sleep, where shadows melt away entirely, and where realities become half-shadow. Our boisterous laughter, our loud spoken jests, even, seemed to fall under its suppressing influence, and their echoes seemed strangled by a stilly hand from out of it, so gentle yet so strong, so calm yet so persistent. Pertinent thereto I often thought were the lines of Sir Walter Scott, descriptive of Melrose Abbey by moonlight, though there was no ancient pile of man's rearing to render the hackneyed passage a strict relevancy:

> "If thou wouldst view fair Melrose aright,
> Go visit it by the pale moonlight,
> For the gay beams of lightsome day
> Shine but to flout the ruins grey," etc.

CHAPTER VIII.

A SEAL HUNT, ETC.

THE beauties of this part of the universe, like all other beauties wherever situated, require personal examination to bring forth full appreciation of them. All attempts at their description by pen and tongue must necessarily fail, unless, indeed, the skill, the genius of a Scott or of a Thoreau could be enlisted in the task of producing, by words, a magical effect, equally surprising with that created by the pencil or brush of a Rembrandt or of a Turner. But as my claims to being a delineator of nature are very humble and limited, I can only, in the course of my narrative, where it might behoove me to enter upon some such attempt, advance this statement of fact as my apology, assuring my readers that a trip to Greenland, each one for himself or herself, is the best way I know of, whereby the æsthetic in connection with that country can be brought before him or her correct in all its details and correlations. Yet I would fain caution that they might find contemplation of its beauties from the shady side of an iceberg, with the thermometer ranging among the sixties below zero, to have quite a cooling effect upon what boiling

enthusiasm of the occasion they might bring along with them from warmer climes, and that that cooling would be very little likely to have any additional warmth imparted to it from a highly possible *bear-hug*, that might at the moment inauspiciously be brought *to bear* upon them. Novelty has doubtless always a keen edge, but under circumstances destitute of real comfort, loaded down with hardship, it is apt to become, especially when worn by slight experience, like "the ragged edge" of the Brooklyn dominie's "despair." It requires then a more than ordinary store of stamina to keep it up to the requirements of law. An immense deal of inherent pluck and resolution have to be expended in the process of sharpening, and there is no demand for delicate frames or fainting hearts in that business. Mark Tapley is the kind of man wanted there, I think, and I regret that Dickens did not make an arctic voyageur out of him, and send him out to Greenland, instead of to the swamps of Illinois, where, when he was unable from illness to utter, he was still in a place where he could raise his hands from under the bed-clothes to write with impunity "*jolly*" upon a slate. If there, he could not at times have done that without having had his fingers frozen before he could get them back again under the sealskins. Some more credit than he has reaped might then have been his, provided he succeeded in carrying out his singular character for encountering misfortunes with hilarity.

How great was the contrast winter there presented to anything ever before witnessed by us during that inclement season. How unlike a winter amid civilization, in America, for instance, in any of its towns or villages. There the lamp-lit streets, as the shades of evening fall, have quite an attraction all their own, while a red glow is streaming through or along the edges of the window-shades, and the store-windows, in variegated and lively show, line the busy streets. Here, none of the means to loosen the grip of the frost-fiend are visible, except a solitary light or two from the ships, mayhap, as one wanders forth upon, or widely scans the landscape. There on a fair country-side are cheerful homes—it may be lordly abodes or humble cottages, sending aloft their incense of blue-grey reek as if within, from family altars, primitive worship was being rendered to the hearth-goddess. Here no stately dwelling nor lowly cot, no cheerful home, gave vent to token of warmth and content within, or of attendant blessings that hover above its sacred precincts! In its bleakest, direst aspects winter here rules supreme and exclusive.

There was doubtless much that was superlatively beautiful, as remarked, in the panorama of Nature here to be viewed. Blame us not, if, under the circumstances, notwithstanding, we demurred a little at enlarging our view of it by frequent excursions. The cold we had to endure, and from that, chiefly,

the dangers we had to face, were fearful bugbears against our venturing far from "*home*." Generally a short distance around the schooner, and a run along the well-worn path leading from vessel to vessel, were the length and breadth of our peregrinations; but occasionally we made a slight detour to the mainland or to some distance off on the ice, after fresh meat, when we had occasion to remark—like the old woman who recognized the beneficence of Nature in the leafage of trees in summer, when the shade was welcome—how providential it was that warm furs are to be had in such a cold country, often guessing very accurately what would have become of us without them. They indeed formed almost the only counteractives of the rigors of that climate to us, while to the natives they were all in all of amelioration to the discomforts of their lot.

One day, shortly after winter had set in—it was about the first of December—I, with two others, had quite an adventure. It arose from the reawakening of a desire not yet gratified, but after the adventure detailed in a previous chapter, temporarily silenced. We wanted to visit an Esquimaux village, to see what it and its inhabitants were like, outside and inside. There was one just below the brow of the bluff over against us. It was not quite a mile away, and the only village, we were informed, for several miles along the coast either way.

My first attempt at calling upon the aborigines —*in situ* as it were—among their families and in society, was abortive for a very good reason. At that season of the year when we made the effort their tenements did not exist. Long before they had all melted away before the sun. Their free inhabitants, too, more fashionable than the denizens of civilized communities, a comparatively few only of whom, when the season comes round, pack up their Saratogas and seek rural retirement or the changing scenes of watering places, all at once quit the spot where they had spent their winter, as if in disgust, for which no blame can be attached to them. No more houses of snow or of any other material do they build that season, but having thus broken up housekeeping, with their whole families, household goods, etc., embarked in little boats, they set off immediately, scattering on extended picnics along the fiords and inlets. This nomadic life, in which they were engaged, hunting, fishing, smoking, feasting and sleeping, seldom in washing or bathing, they persist in all summer, sleeping under scanty awnings, such as whalers may furnish them, or under a sheltering shelf of rock, or in their open boats. Often during this period they are also employed, as they may feel disposed to go in, by different vessels in assisting to capture whales, for which they receive little or nothing, but think themselves amply paid off with a glass of whisky, a plug of tobacco, or

a dipper of molasses, given every now and again. And about the time "the sun has gone into his winter cave," as they call it, they rendezvous in the localities before occupied, or others previously designated, where the time, till the first snow, is passed in idling, or recounting to one another their adventures since last meeting, or in fishing or an occasional hunt, as required. Then they unitedly fall to and build their little huts out of that aerial matter. These they reside in without further shift until spring once more breaks in upon them, opening up to them their sunny haunts, their picnic grounds.

To visit one of their villages, now so close to us, was no sooner resolved upon, than we set about executing the intention. And to conserve another end, practically useful as well, we proposed wending our way there preparatory to a seal hunt, thus "killing two birds with one stone," to use a very trite saying. Accordingly, we one night communicated, in a jargon partly understood, I suppose, with old Ugag, as he came among us hunting up his absent squaw Fanny, who, like a great many of her sex, was fonder of "*crusading*" about among her neighbors than attending to her own womanly duties at home. The old fellow was wizened and dried like a Peruvian mummy. His wife was one of the prettiest in these parts. He was surly and disagreeable on the evening in question, more so than ordinarily,

apparently troubled by what is by no means universally prevalent among them—to do them justice, I say it—a jealous disposition. He had some little difficulty in finding his better half, who had stored herself away somewhere, and when he did find her, he had some more in prevailing on her to accompany him home. He would likely have resorted to brute force, such being his temper evidently, in drawing her along, but among us he was obliged to keep himself under restraint sufficient to use coaxing instead. It was rather inopportune, I suppose, to have attempted forming an engagement with him just then, for the next day, but we did not permit this consideration to obtrude, in view of his being one of the best hunters to be found; and the fact of this people being very placable, kept it entirely in the background. We judged that by a plug or two of tobacco given by way of earnest fee, we had made matters all right. So we tried to conciliate the little savage, and we joked with him on the very subject of his jealousy—a rather poor way, it must be admitted—of soothing his irate feelings.

Just as he and his cheery little wife were preparing to leave the vessel, we thought of making him doubly secure by treating them both to a spoonful of molasses apiece, passing to him at the same time a bottleful of the same, and then told them "good-night till the morrow," when we would be early at their eglo. We noticed, indeed, that his silence

was all the time rather stiffly maintained, but that was all. We gave the circumstance no further concern. We did not dream of the possibility of its being in the least ominous, of his "nursing his wrath to keep it warm," or if we did faintly, it was to banish the idea as incongruous—wild enough for warmer and more fostering climes, but surely not for this land of ice and cold as we knew it. The morrow, however, had its own tale to tell to the contrary, notwithstanding.

We had risen dim and early, and had partaken of a good substantial breakfast to speed us on our way. No sign of elemental commotion appeared. All things were ready. Our sealskin bags to sleep in, in case we were out for some time, were swung across our shoulders like knapsacks, as we descended the ship's side. The way we found clear, and was trodden without any difficulty. Nor had we any difficulty in discovering the village when we came close to it. It consisted of about a dozen straggling huts, each resembling a huge kettle, something like what we had on board for "trying out," turned upside down, with a procession of smaller and gradually diminishing ones joined to it by what appeared to be a covered archway.

We approached the nearest to us, and one of us getting down on his hands and knees, crawled in at the low and narrow aperture. There was just room for him to sit upon his haunches when inside the

first little dome. He then crept through a tunnel of about six feet long by about two and one-half wide and the same in height, into the next, whose roof was a little higher, and so on till he found himself in the last of these chambers, where he could stand erect. It was the family hall, sitting room and bed-room combined. There he made known our desire to be directed to the eglo of Ugag. One of the women immediately responding to his appeal, led the way out. He followed, rejoining us. She guided us to Ugag's residence, and without more ado our whole party proceeded to enter. We all had wound our ways inside, the last of us being as far as the third stage-dome, when the first had reached the presence-chamber of the hunter. Then a quick cry from Fanny gave the alarm, as she sprang forward and arrested the hand of her enraged lord and master. A knife was in that clenched member.

Though there was only a feeble glimmer of artificial light in the eglo, its walls were transparent, and sufficient light came from outside to enable me to perceive the situation. The wiry little rascal could scarcely be restrained by the utmost efforts of his screaming squaw. I happened to be first of the party, and saw at a glance that retreat was cut off. Before we could turn and crawl out again, Ugag would be upon us. Our knives were in our pockets, but before they could be got at, from the strappings with which we had fixed our personal baggage, we

would be either murdered or badly handled. Escape must serve our need. But how? I instantly saw what alone could be done, and hallooed lustily so that all might hear and act, "*Break down the house!*" By a good strong effort each of us knocked his way through, sprang to a short distance, and then took breath preparing for defence. We did not know exactly how we stood, in the surprise, or whether or not the other natives would support Ugag in further designs of attack, and so we made ready as best we could. Our knives were brought forth, and we then thought of returning to settle up the difficulty in the same manner as it had presented itself to us.

We were not long left, however, to mistrust and to deliberate, for the others soon showed themselves peaceably inclined, and that Ugag alone was on the war-path. His brooding jealousy had shown itself, yet failed to find further outlet. His fellows were all profuse in apologies as well as they could express them, and so entirely took sides with us that the surly savage, finding himself thus isolated, instead of repairing damages by trying to make friends, or by patching up the crevices in the walls of his eglo, which his demoniac rage had caused, packed up all his traps, laid them on his sledge, and moved to parts unknown, before another hour was over him, taking also along his three "picaninnies," another squaw he had, and Fanny, who, the little minx, taking her seat demurely behind him, continued to ply us with

furtive signs and gestures, till lost in the quickly dwindling distance of the twilight.

At all this we looked on, with the appeased wrath and complaisance of superiors, soon forming on the strength of renewed protestations, fresh friendships, and firmer alliances than before, with the kindly creatures, and condescended to accept the hospitalities of the aroused village, without having to be troubled with the presentation of citizenship, or with being invited to a banquet at any of their United Service clubs, where Apsley-house speeches of mutual admiration had to be made. We just entered at their solicitation, their egloes, partook of some raw seal and melted snow with them, and there managed to secure in place of Ugag, the services of three others, to attend us on our predatory excursion with required aid.

Their huts, we found, were all built as much alike as birds' nests belonging to the same species. The material is simply snow cut out of the hard field, where it has fallen in large flakes, afterwards consolidated by the wind and cold. The pieces or "bricks" are twelve or thirteen inches in length, by about nine or ten inches in breadth, and only from two and-a-half inches to three inches thick. These are laid upon their long edges, one over the other, and pressed in. Trimmed off and made to fit by these skilled workmen, the cold gives more and more adhesive power, and imparts to the structure a

solidity, which the little heat within tends to augment, as it weighs against the intense cold without. As there is not the smallest chance of water flowing in upon them, no matter what direction a storm may come from, as it sweeps over them, the entrance is mainly constructed with the object in view of keeping in the heat—convenience otherwise being, in the minds of the architects, quite secondary to that. Hence from the first porch or little dome to the final entrance into the family den, there is a gradual slope downward, which of itself, without raising to a higher level the summit of any of the domes, would secure to each greater distance between apex and floor; yet each is also built higher than the one preceding it—thus increasing at both ends, above and below—till the last one is reached, which is also made more capacious by embracing wider area. In it more than twelve people of ordinary stature can be accommodated with standing or sitting room; but as these Lilliputian people are much under the usual size, about half as many more of them might find equal accommodation.

The floor of this main building is divided across the center, one-half forming a dais about two feet high, which is covered with furs, and used by the family or its visitors as a sitting platform, after the style of a Turkish divan, and when sleeping time comes, as a common bed, into which all huddle promiscuously beneath the skins. In it a solitary fire

is kept burning continuously; this is supplied with wick, placed lengthways along the tinned edge of a hollowed log or segment of timber scooped slightly out, fed by strips of seal-blubber heaped aback of it, the melting oil oozing from which is readily sucked up, and affords a feeble flame, lengthy but low. Over it is suspended from a line fastened to the roof by a simple contrivance, a can capable of holding about two to three quarts. This vessel is continually replenished with snow, which by the heat from beneath is melted—supplying all the water used in the establishment for drinking, ablution being a performance generally unpracticed by them, they, like the Arabs of the dry and sandy Sahara, not once entertaining the idea of profaning the treasures of heaven by such vulgar use. It is seldom, either, that they cook their food, but if at an odd time they are struck by the whim of so modifying their bill of fare, the flesh which forms their staple—seal or walrus—is thrust into the old canister, and there parboiled, thus furnishing for their truly Epicurean diet a third, if not a fourth course, the first being raw liver, the second raw flesh, and the third *a la whaler*, if the contents of a deer paunch do not come in ahead. We were *witnesses* to all four varieties of dishes as they were dealt—*not served, sans ceremonie;* but in preference limited our own gastronomic feats to the raw frozen seal meat, which we cut off in chunks with our jack-knives, our squeamishness having objections

to the filth of the cookery, the rawness of the liver, and the masticated, half digested deer-food, which last is reckoned by them a special dainty.

After a brief meal, and observations generally upon the domestic economy of our entertainers—a very vulgar thing to do, as I have heard tell, and one never done among the *genteel*—we gave notice to our hosts and prepared to start. Their sledges were immediately got ready, the animals being first fed of the débris of the feast; bones and rejected portions of the meat being thrown out to them on the snow, causing a rare scramble, with such worrying and tearing and snarling and biting as would do honor to any kennel in Christendom.

One of us went in each sledge, and with so many hunters, and such outfit, rare sport was anticipated. We managed to keep the cold at bay pretty well, by tight wrapping in the skins, which were thrown in abundantly. The sledge was simply a platform about six feet in length, by about three and a half across, raised about one foot and a half from the ground, where it ran upon two runners, shod with whale's bone, rather more than three feet apart. The dogs were harnessed to it by merely having a breast strap of sealskin leather, soft and pliable, passed across the chest of each, and leading over the back to a long stout rope of the same material fastened to the mid front of the sledge. At its other end this tractor forms a loop-head, thrown over the leader in like

manner as over the rest, he having this post of honor assigned him from his superior sagacity, in not only knowing his business, but in sticking fast to it with more than bull-dog tenacity. They are all managed by the long lash of the driver, whose crack is oftener heard than his whip is felt, but all ineffective in causing the leader to advance upon insecure ground, or to take a direction that will bring the party into jeopardy.

These dogs are not of uniform size, but range in magnitude all the way up from that of a small shepherd dog to that of a firm set, massive Newfoundland. Their coating of hair is thick, shaggy and very long. Except when hungry, they are not ferocious, though accustomed to rough treatment, without any care being bestowed upon them. They will average in weight about one hundred pounds, and are calculated to draw a weight equaling their own. Fed only once a day at most, when in quarters, they will travel in one day over sixty miles, dragging a load behind them, and only be fed when starting and when they get to their journey's end. Their powers of endurance are wonderful, and in harness they are exceedingly tractable and docile.

On we skurried over the ice, drawn by these useful and sagacious brutes, about as fast as a stage-coach with horses. We were not long before we got out of sight of the village and the ships, turning an angle of the island and making for a headland

which jutted into the gulf in huge misshapen fragments, resembling the under-jaw of some tobacco-consuming hag. Against it, about a month bygone, I had seen the fretful waters leaping wildly and wreathing constantly with their spray, while for many miles might have been heard their uproar.

> "Have I not seen the sea, puffed up with winds,
> Rage like an angry boar chafed with sweat?"

as it dashed upon its marled surface, and roared in ever renewed growlings, but now, as if the spirit which had lent to it life were fled, and as if the chill of death gave quietus to its distressful passions, there it stretched before us, gloomy but restful, forbidding in aspect, but safe in reality. I approached it with somewhat of the sensation one may have in going up to a dead lion, late the terror of the campaign, as he shook his terrible mane, and uttered his prolonged thunderings, and I thought, "Is not a living dog better than a dead lion?" as we threaded our way in peace between two particularly gruff appearing crags.

On the other side of this promontory a wide, clear basin was disclosed, and as we entered it we came upon the destined field of operations. The dogs of our sledges were unhitched, speedily finding places to lie on among the skins we had on the sledges, or they took to themselves a tumble on the hard snow, while on foot we advanced in search of blow-holes, each *duo*, hunter and whaler, separating by themselves, from the others.

The native with whom it was my lot to be, had at his command quite a large vocabulary of English. He was known among us by the name of Johnny Penny. On one occasion he had spent a winter in Great Britain, and on that account had superior claims to recognition—he, at all events, making bold assertions of them. Among us, too, he had always a great deal to say of what he saw while within civilization's confines, but it was seldom, indeed, that much intelligence was emitted in those speeches of his.

I was often curious to know what were his impressions of this or that, as the thought came to me, always imagining that the observations he would make about them would be fraught with the astonishment of an unsophisticated intellect, and so at different times I had plied him with question and leading remark, designed to draw him out. But it was little Johnny Penny had to say concerning anything but *horses*. This was his theme of themes, of which he never grew tired. Strike off from it where I might, it was only for a few seconds he could be diverted from his favorite topic, which, to the vehicle of his imagination, was like a rut in the highway, into which, pry it out as you may, your heavy country dray is bound to descend the first few steps advanced. Speak, for instance of the railway to him, and Johnny Penny looked serious, then knowingly whistled, then snorted after a most eccentric fashion,

to imitate the noise of the engine, and gestured and "*hooshed*" to imitate its speed, but only looked bright and cheerful as, dropping the subject at once, he entered upon his discussion of the merits of horseflesh, which he did with more than the gusto of a genuine old turfite. It was such an improvement on dogs to him, and these being the solitary parallelism he observed between his own country and Britannia, there he was content to rest all effort to appreciate, and upon that alone he was happy to expend eulogium. The climate did not suit this child of ice and snow. In it he could not live—so warm and damp. And his home in the hard, cold north he was only too glad to reach once more, returning thither by the earliest Aberdeen whaler of the season.

I also frequently asked him about the Queen, for Johnny had risen high on the social ladder in his brief visit, and had been presented to Her Majesty at Court. His impressions about her were apparently favorable, but it always thrust him into the mist to be forced to express them. He wandered. On the whole, the impression he seemed to leave on his hearers, might be that Her Majesty was a doubtful kind of character, whom he did not have an overweening desire to expatiate on, though professing a high respect for her. As we went along on the ice, I tried to get Johnny to divulge what he knew of her, detrimental or otherwise, but "the horses of her

big sledge" was all that he would talk about. They were the *ne plus ultra* of high life to him, "*dog 'way back horse tail, pooh!*" "*Horse no eat seal-meat.*" "*Horse no bite—horse kick, boo!*" "*Horse hold bride in mouth!*" In fact, Johnny Penny had horse on the brain badly, and it was no use getting him to be within limits on this idea.

But absolute silence as we progressed was imposed. We now began looking around for a blow-hole. The keen eye of my companion was not very long in detecting one. It was no bigger than the hole a field mouse makes in a furrow, and might easily be passed over by me; nor were there any signs around it, such as a raised bordering, by which it might be discovered. We just stumbled upon it. My companion at once cautioned me away from him, and stealing back a short distance, I lay down upon the ice and kept watch upon his movements. Throwing himself on his knees, he assumed the appearance, as nearly as possible, of a seal, by at the same time drawing the hood of his cooltang over his head, and thus concealing his face. In that position he remained almost motionless for a long time; I suppose it must have been an hour, but it seemed longer to me, eagerly and somewhat impatiently noting the flight of every second.

At length a chance seemingly presented, the sticking up of a snout which I could not discern, and coincidently the sound of respiration which I did

perceive. Quick as a flash the seal spear held in the furtively uplifted hand was driven home into the orifice, the shaft of the same immediately falling loose. A short struggle ensued, the captive making strenuous effort at escape under the ice, the captor, with one hand, holding on to the line attached to the barb, and, with the other, wielding deftly a hatchet with which he broke the ice, now two or three feet thick. An opening being by this means effected wide enough for the passage of a large body, the line was pulled in with both hands, and then held by one again, while the other re-snatched the hatchet and used it in dispatching the victim. This was soon and easily done with a few energetic taps, and the prize was then dragged unresistingly aloft. Up it came, before my delighted eyes, a fine specimen. I then ran forward to render assistance and to claim some share of the honor of the capture, a very small share indeed if fairly meted.

The barb was now extracted by the hunter, the stalk reinserted in its socket, and while he proceeded to hunt up another blow-hole, I hauled the prize off to the sledge. Returning to near where I saw him again planted, I again witnessed the performance of this act; and about half a dozen times it was repeated with slight variation and with similar result —the seals captured weighing each from one hundred to one hundred and fifty pounds. This was fine success, which in less than three hours attended

us, for the capture of the others did not require, for some reason or other, such long watching and waiting as did that of the first.

Having been a patient eye-witness of the sport thus long, I concluded that it was now high time that I had a hand at the business *in propria persona*, instead of having it all done by proxy. Now that so much substantial gain had been secured, I deliberated that my 'prentice hand might be risked without danger of material injury from awkwardness or mismanagement. I then requested of Johnny Penny that he would give me the privilege of occupying his place for the nonce. Finding a hole, he immediately relinquished it to me, quietly putting me in position, and adding to the instruction I had already acquired from observation by the language of sign. In compliance with the received formula, I now crouched over my aperture in the ice, and commenced my vigil, reminded, as I did so, of my feline "*Beauty*" at home, and of how, erewhile, I have amusingly observed her couchant opposite some unfortunate mousey's hole, little dreaming then that, in good earnest, I should one day simulate her so closely. Oh "*Beauty*"! Oh, home and friends there! if ye could then have only seen me, ye would not have been very apt to recognize the wanderer! Long time I seemed to have to wait. I was tired out, and was inwardly very much inclined to blow up all seal flesh for tardiness, and for having me exposed so long

upon that cold bare flat. At length I gasped in excitement, and with the cold, as I saw a bubble rise and heard it breaking on the surface. A nozzle quickly followed. My heart made a leap to my mouth, as, with all the force I could gather, I drove my spear into the object in front of me. My aim, close as it was, did not with sufficient accuracy reach its victim. Part of its force was expended on the ice-rim, though the barb did bring itself in the creature's head, but without stunning it enough. The handle at once flew off—being only inserted in a loose socket for the purpose of the blow. I took to my hatchet as I had seen Johnny do. Breaking the ice with one hand, and with the other holding on, I found to be hard work and slippery. I grappled manfully with it, however, until finding myself too much employed and having both to do at once, and in great danger of tumbling into a more than tepid bath, and of being then drawn beneath the thick crust on which I stood, I called lustily over my shoulder for help. My Esquimau friend came forward in great glee, chuckling at my perplexity, and, while I engaged both hands in straining at the cord, he promptly wound matters up with a few strokes on the ice, opening sufficient room, and a well directed tap at the root of the proboscis, which settled my aquatic acquaintance's unreasonable backwardness and resistive might.

Thus was accomplished, in a very few minutes, a

piece of work from which I henceforth derived as much glory as I ever won from anything I ever did, not excepting fighting in the rebellion and some tall marches on the retreat; and an event was then completed, which recapitulation many times has never once lessened in magnitude or curtailed in importance. My first *pussy* was now fairly hauled in, and I bore it on my back in triumph, transporting it differently from the others, which I had merely drawn after me, and, depositing it with a shout in the sledge, prepared to return, as my companions, all of whom had brought even more success with them than I did, were awaiting us for the home stretch. Our team being already harnessed by their helping hands, we sprang on, with the seal yet warm in front, and set in at a rapid rate, retracing the course we had gone.

As we drew nigh, we found the whole village emptying itself round us, its last lagging denizens creeping from their burrows. We sprang to our feet and to land as soon as we came in their midst, throwing out the carcasses last slaughtered. All the others, which had been longer dead, were stiffened hard as boards. These former our friends seized, cutting open their jugulars and letting what blood would flow into pans and vessels brought forward to catch it. This, in all instances, their head-man or anticote, as he is called, a kind of patriarchal "medicine-chief," first partook of. Then, without regard

to precedence, all pitched in, having each a share, until the last gurgling drop had ceased to flow, and was formed into a ruby icicle, congealed by the cold or exhausted in supply. The carcasses of these were then ripped open, we offering no objection, and the liver torn out, cut into slices, and while yet warm, was divided among and devoured by them. We left them there and hurried off to the schooner with our splendid load of fresh meat. There we were hailed with acclamations as our day's work was shown, and had the pleasure of unsparing plaudits, enhanced after a brief time by tit-bits of roasted meat, while our companions joined in the feast our enterprise had provided.

We also sent, on that occasion, a couple of seals apiece to each of the other vessels of the squadron, and one captain to whom we had sent a share of the best, ordering us, in return of the compliment, a ration of grog each, we turned in, without being bothered by the natives that night, pleased with ourselves and with every one around, merely reserving a small quantity of jolly reprobation for the runaway Ugag, who was, by the way, injured by none of it. When we told the captain of his fiasco, he swore that he should have no more traffic with the schooner, though Fanny was understood as not lying under the same dire embargo with her liege-lord.

Several times after did our men go out on similar excursions, but not always with the same luck—at

times coming home entirely empty, not having the necessary patience to remain long enough for a catch, when the seal is shy or scarce in the locality. When hard set upon by hunger, a native will remain in the position of watcher for twenty-four hours at a stretch, before getting an opportunity to spear anything, and that without any refreshment whatever. This, I think, surpasses the stoicism and perseverance shown even by Americans, who, as is well known, are the most patient people—excepting Esquimaux—on the habitable globe.

A walrus-hunt is also a very enjoyable employment, the flesh, though not quite so palatable as the seal's, being very good eating, and much resorted to by the natives. I never was on one of these, but I have heard my messmates going over their exploits, and recounting their captures in that line, with high enjoyment. In many instances, when whales are not plentiful, this animal is sought after by whalers, as the blubber enwrapping their flesh gives a very good quality of oil, nearly equal in commercial value to that of the whale. I have seen it stated by some whom I regard as "*fictionists*," that it is found commonly from twelve to eighteen feet long, and often weighing seven or eight hundred pounds, with ivory tusks several feet in length, and one of the most ferocious animals in existence. I discovered it to be generally less than six feet in length, and in extreme instances to weigh not more than one hundred and

seventy-five pounds. Two tusks, from eighteen to thirty inches in length in a grown specimen, project downward from the upper jaw, and are of great service to the animal in enabling it to climb from the water upon an ice-cake, or upon the surface of a rock, to enjoy a sunning or a siesta. They sleep, usually, however, in the water, having sentries posted to give alarm to the "school" on any appearance suspicious, making sleeping-time the most difficult in which to get upon them. Their ferocity is not of a very appalling sort.

CHAPTER IX.

ARCTIC HOLIDAYS.

As the mind of man, that interior mechanism, that spiritual organization to which his corporeal structure is fit correspondence, is in all its varied phases designed and supported by an Almighty Power, and as religion is simply an embodied claim, more or less recognized, it may be, but still universally extant, following upon these varied phases as far as responsibilities can go, the sequence is that there is no phase or mood of mind, in itself innocuous and apart from the circumstance of evil, but what finds full sanction beneath the wide panoply of devotion. There is a time for casting away stones, preceding the time for gathering them, just as there is a time for disparaging natural truths, and that previous to our collection and appropriation of them. There is a time for joy as well as a time for sorrow—an appropriate one for every condition, as well as for every kind of mortality, and all, whether in equal proportion or not, are admitted a place in the economy of Him who is Love and Wisdom. And all dispositions of mind will seek their meet manifestations as the ultimates to which all things tend.

An early Christian authority says: "*If any be merry among you, let him sing psalms;* but the Master Himself, in a parable, has set forth what is more natural: The woman who lost her money, and afterward found it, collects her neighbors together; her invitation of hospitality, and the glad news which inspires it having vent together harmoniously. The free and generous, as opposed to the niggard and unsympathetic, seek company in their happiness, however much they may choose solitude for their misery; and seeking it, they desire to make their friends or guests participant. Hence, as the Master pictures such scenes exactly, there is feasting and dancing and general merriment. Very likely men are then often found outside the pale of what may be reckoned right. The boundary line between Mirth and Folly is apt to be obliterated when many feet tread trippingly. But what action, what scene of mortal life is divested of wrong? With our gravest performances vice mixes; our intents are all more or less polluted, and hypocrisy, in justifiable or unjustifiable degree, covers them over as with a thick veil. With our light acts evil mingles also as with our gravest, but their motives are less obscured.

So, according to the comprehension and capacity and disposition generally prevalent among us, when that season came round, which a great portion of Christendom has for so long been accustomed to hail like jubilee, and to blazon forth with rejoicings in a

universal yet individual manner, we similarly prepared to greet it. Different classes of men were among us, but into the hearts of all a beam from the Star of Bethlehem threw a bright spot, as cheering as any sunshine could have been. Skepticism—small, narrow, self-conceited, wiseacre infidelity, if it was present with us, did not show itself. It took a back seat, or crept into its diminutive shell, horns and all, while its trifling votaries tried to creep out of their egotisms to a level with the rest of us. The irreligious or quasi-believing, glorying in the occasion, as if identified for the time with all that it imports, gave free vent to their dancing spirits, while some good souls there were who chose to follow the advice to sing psalms, supplementing these with prayer. These were chiefly found among the Scotch, a Puritan people, who unwontedly observing the day, chose that way of doing so.

Each Sunday regularly, twice a day, divine service was held on board the "*Perseverance*," a chapter of the Bible being perused with commentation, and *extempore* prayer, and frequently the reading of a sermon, besides prayer-meeting twice during the week; and now they quietly joined in with us in a celebration, tacitly ignored by them at home, and in a way best consonant to their ideas and tastes, where every one followed his own bent so much. Not that they altogether held themselves aloof from us, who sought less serious exercises, either on this joyous

anniversary of the day, when the crowning work of redemption was on the part of the Highest begun. They too, had a large element among them as unregenerate as the rest of us, if not more so, and with them and us and all together a grand time on the ice was inaugurated.

The Scotch celebrated some of their national games similar to what the Caledonian clubs, all over the country, are in the habit of doing, though there was no bag pipe music, thank Heaven! and though kilts were conspicuously absent. Throwing the hammer, tossing the caber, the Highland fling, the sword dance, hitch-and-kick, and a number of races were indulged in, as I have seen them in Jones' Wood, New York city. And we Americans, joining faintly in with them, had base-ball matches, and gymnasium sports, in which they also bore a hand with us. There was in that crowd no sparing of muscle, no chary exposition of any game. All was according to Demosthenes with regard to the first, second, third, etc., principles of oratory—*action*, *action*, *action*, each trying his very utmost to counteract the cold, and so produce a duplex sensation.

I thought I should like much to get a view of the *tout ensemble* from a small distance apart. For this purpose I signaled a friend, who at the time happened like myself to be one of the "outs" in the game of base-ball going on. He instantly chimed in with this notion, and we both proceeded to the deck

of the "*Isabella*," which was nearest, to gratify the *penchant*. Ascending her side we found her, as all the others presumably were also, deserted of almost every man. The "anchor watch" alone, was visible upon her, as he stood riveted in gaze at the lively scene. It was certainly an entrancing spectacle. There they were, in extending groups between us and the land, the Americans in front of us, and the Scotch a little to the right of them, and more toward the center of the line formed by the vessels. Between the two parties, a few kept passing to and fro like eddying currents. The changes in the forms of the groupings were ever and anon as fluctuating as mutations in a kaleidoscope, and the din produced by so many eager voices striving at once to be heard in exclamation, advice, question or reply, sounded more as one than if we were among them, and resembled a natural music of speech in a chorus of speakers. We remained there for some minutes as if spell-bound in contemplation of what was so unique an experience, while the wild fantastic light of the aurora borealis showered over it a luminosity, bringing every figure into a fine bronze relief, as it threw the charms of its peculiar frosting over it. We then were obliged to descend and rejoin the players, as it became our turn to occupy the field.

This stir continued among us for fully four hours, in the forepart of the day, till at last one of the Scotchmen, with the usual *ingenium perfervidum*

Scotorum, came to grief, in a breakneck race over hurdles. Entrammeled as he was with so much clothing, he slipped upon the ice, just as, ahead of all, he surmounted the last wicket. A fracture of the arm above the elbow joint was the result, and he was carried off amid quite a turmoil.

The time assigned to these amusements had now however expired, and, in any case, we were about dispersing for refreshments; but this mishap was a damper to what otherwise could have been held by us to have been a term of unalloyed enjoyment, which as a memory is yet dear, and as "a thing of beauty, is a joy forever." The picture of the injured man as he was being carried away by his comrades toward his ship, attended by the surgeon, yet remains to smirch the loveliness of the scene in my recollection.

We now had a collation served out to us in shape of a hot meal of seal's flesh, with desiccated vegetables cooked in good style, and after that was discussed, passed the time in smoking, joking, card-playing, chess, dominoes, and in the elementary branches of learning, reading and writing, till six P. M.

At that hour, in compliance with a general invitation given to the whole squadron, by one who had the name of being the stingiest captain among them, but whose heart had for once opened to mellow influences, all who chose repaired to the brig "*Isabella*," where a magnificent dinner was served, without a

white vest being visible, in as good a style as could be got up.

The large hall which the housing had made of her quarter-deck, was magnificently or tastefully draped with flags spread along the sides and gathered in drooping folds of graceful design in the center. Four tables covered with sail-cloth and napery ran along the entire length of the room, and were spread out with plates and bright shining tin goblets, and at the upper ends of the middle ones stood two splendid seals, roasted whole and stuffed. A large potato was in the mouth of each, I was about to remark as natural as life, but would qualify the expression, seeing I never did hear of or see seals indulging in the luxury of esculents. In front of each stood an immense bouquet of rare roses and other exotics, the former by far the largest I ever saw, though I have since traveled much and voyaged more. Coming to examine them closely I found them to be inodorous and fadeless in their tints or hues, for they were made out of the same material as is now beneath the reader's eyes—paper, in fact—bearing sufficient resemblance to what they were intended to represent, for those who were no connoisseurs, and who examined them moreover by lamp and candle.

By means of these artificial substitutes for daylight, a brilliant illumination was effected, and as we entered and took our places at the table, natives of both sexes and all, we became aware that we were

sitting down to a good thing, and did not grudge—only a little—the rather long grace with which the young doctor of the "*Perseverance*" prefaced it, by request of mine host. The meat proved delicious, and the stuffing and other condiments superb, and we did ample justice to the treat, Captain B——'s face, as he sat at the head of the table surrounded by the commanders and officers of the different ships, wearing an oily and bland appearance that I never saw it have before, and could not regard as quite natural.

After supper, while the tables were being cleared, the fumes of smoke that succeeded, as cigars and pipes were lit and puffed, with huge satisfaction, became soon so thick, that the clouds raised by the original Dutch settlers of Communipaw would have compared to them as the steam of a boiling kettle to the fogs that frequent the banks of Newfoundland. One felt almost inclined, in it, to call for a fish-horn to discover, by blowing it, whereabouts was his next neighbor. After a while, however, this had to be stopped. All the pipes were extinguished, and only cigars permitted to continue the fumigation. As the atmosphere, by a little ventilation, became clear, we saw the steward advancing with a number of followers, carrying buckets in their hands as if to extinguish a fire, but it was, we soon found, only to kindle one. Grog was now served, and the usual thaw ensued. Speeches were not thrust upon us,

but brief remarks addressed to all and sundry, became abundant, producing invariable laughter as they were intended to do; songs also were introduced, and every appearance of a moony time and a wet night were being manifested, when the captain of the "*Perseverance*" bluntly invited us all over to his barque to witness theatricals there about to commence. "*Come ane, come a' an' dinna bide for a second ca'!*" said he, as he followed up his words by springing to his sturdy legs, by pulling the hood of his cooltang over his head, and by leading off. A change of base began abruptly to ensue. The jolly crowd wrapped up and at once made for the gangway. Steps made out of cakes of ice and snow then led out upon the ice, and a brief run brought us to the side of the "*Perseverance.*" There no tickets had to be procured, nor any obstacle was there to bar an ingress; so we piled in, each finding a place suited to him among the raised benches of her covered deck. Soon we were all in, snug and warm, two large stoves blazing for our comfort.

Well, after some cat-calling and whistling, by way of reviving old times, the curtain rose and the play began, without the intervention of an orchestra. The piece brought out for the occasion was a melodrama, in three acts, entitled, "Susan, or The Three Rivals." It, of course, elicited immense applause, particularly where the singing and the vernacular came in, for it was a Scotch play. The colloquies in

broad Scotch were very amusing, seeing we did not understand half that was said, and could not resist laughing, for what we did not understand we took for good joking.

One song was thrice encored. It was rendered in excellent voice and very good action, by Jamey MacGregor, its author. It had, moreover, the additional recommendation to its audience of having been written on a circumstance fancied enough, which happened to one of his shipmates, of whose leave-taking with his sweetheart he had been witness. That same gentleman, by name Johnny Taylor, was among the audience, and had barely sense and humor enough, I imagine, to stand the banter its public delivery called for.

Johnny Taylor was a little fellow, and like all wee men, very conceited. His lady-love was otherwise proportioned. On taking leave of her she had accompanied him to the door, and there had practiced certain osculatory demonstrations without suppression of sound. Besides MacGregor, who stood in the shade a little way off, and both saw and heard all that went on, the lass's mother, who was on the watch apparently, heard the music—well-known to herself of old—and, struck with the impropriety involved, stepped forward upon the scene as Johnny—he stepped out. She then challenged her daughter sharply for the folly, in almost the words of the song. The poor lassie tried to throw the blame off her own

shoulders, even upon those of her departed lover. "Indeed, indeed, I couldna help it, he cam ower me sae skeely," she said. "Oh, dinna tell me that great lee," replied to this the shrewd dame, "hoo could he reach your mow' an' he sae wee, gin ye didna curtsey laigh an' niffer tae, ye jaud." This was the most successful part of the whole entertainment, creating, as introduced into the play, quite an entertainment of itself. The words I got a copy of, and preserving them apart from my other papers, they were not with them lost. Here they are, supposed to be addressed to Johnny Taylor by his disconcerted dulcinea:

THE KISS AT THE DOOR.

By J. McG.

The gate ye gaed yestreen, my lad,
  Oh dinna come the nicht,
The vera thocht o't puts me in
  A swither an' a fricht.

Your arm ye put aboot my neck
  Whan at the door we parted,
An' syne ye pressed your lips to mine,
  Wi' love sae warm-hearted.

But man, your caution was forgot,
  My mither heard the smack;
Ye maunna kiss sae lood again
  The neist time ye come back.

I turned me 'roun' to canter ben,
  An' just had steeked the door,
When wi' a can'le i' her han'
  She scanned me o'er an' o'er.

Quo' she: What noise was that I heard,
  Ye limmer dinna lee,
Wi graceless geek, ye hae alloo'd
  A chiel your lips too free.

I see it in your scarlet cheeks
  An' in your dooncast look,
In whilk your future may be read,
  As plain as print in book.

An' mair she spake, oh muckle mair,
  An' glunshed far waur to thole,
Until I prayed I could but creep
  Into some rattan's hole.

But warst o' a' she said or looked,
  That tears brocht to my e'e,
Was: "Oo John Taylor reached your mou'
  For a' that he's sae wee."

After the play, which had a fair sprinkling of talent in rather high tragedian order, with deep laid plot and counter plots, not now needing any resurrection at my hands, seeing also I am unable to give it, a pantomime was presented affording lots of fun for all, but putting the simple natives in perfect raptures. Not understanding much of the language of the drama they had just witnessed, they had almost as good perception as ourselves of the points in a pantomime—if broad hints and dashes can be with propriety called points. Its gestures and grimaces were exceedingly liked by them; and I have always observed that whatever would most please a child was most welcomed by savages.

An hour or two were thus pleasantly spent, and when it was over, each man as he came to the gangway was handed a ration of grog, which tossing off, he bade good night to his good-natured entertainer, who, until his visitors had all departed, stood by telling them that what they received and partook of was *doch-an-doras*, *Scotice* for stirrup-cup.

When I got inside my berth that night, I felt as tired as many a time I did after a hard day's work, and soon was sleeping as soundly as a spinning top. Next day I made the rounds and found every one in better spirits for the recreation, it forming the sole subject of conversation. And it was not for many days either that it fell into desuetude as such.

Very often we had recourse to another kind of exercise, that was both novel and exciting. It consisted in ascending the hill behind us to the top of its slanting incline, by a rugged pathway which we had managed to scratch along the edge of its slippery surface, and then sliding down the smooth face of it upon a sealskin laid flat under us, with the hair next the ice, and, of course lying backward. This sport we could not at all times indulge in. It required, from the exposure demanded, what was then a warm day, one with the thermometer in the thirties and no wind blowing. The distance from the base of this eminence to its summit was, I should judge, fully a quarter of a mile, pretty steeply pitched, and a splendid run one made, propelled by the growing im-

petus of his own weight, far out upon the ice of the gulf. One day about this time I committed quite a blunder, while engaged in this amusement. Happening to get a little off the usual track, and not being able to guide my sealskin platform, I had to let it guide itself, like the horse of the famous John Gilpin. Down it flew right toward the Esquimaux village, situated a little to the right of the proper course. I clearly saw whither I was speeding when some distance off; but there was no help for it. I merely hallooed desperately to the inmates. Out they crawled, and some of them in no more than time. The hand of fate I felt upon me as I swooped down among them. I put my arms in front of my face, as if to conceal the awful catastrophe from my horrent eyes. Rip-bang through the center of one of their huts I then went, the flash of the family taper being but one instant revealed to me, as the contents thereof "anointed my head with oil." Out far into the ice I dashed—impeded nought by the accident; but when the force which sped me, had died out, I made headway for the schooner, and did not immediately thereafter visit that village.

Other amusements than those detailed, we had not much of, but those were often repeated. Three times a week the theatre was open to us after this performance, and plays, and pantomimes and nigger minstrels by times occupied its boards, while nightly the actors showed signs of improvement, getting more

and more at ease with their audience, and more familiar with the characters enacted.

In due season, New Year's day came round, and another high time was anticipated, but not realized. The fickle goddess was not then propitious. A terrible storm raged, the wind blowing hard and the thermometer—a spirit one—75 degrees below zero. To venture even on deck for the briefest time was dangerous. During nearly all of it indoors we were cooped, as behind the bars of a prison. Visits, except in a very few venturesome cases, were completely precluded. We huddled round the stoves, read, smoked and chatted among ourselves and with our Esquimaux friends, who even in that juncture did not desert us. Indeed they were with us in better quarters than among themselves they could possibly provide, and they had quite discrimination enough to be fully cognizant of the fact.

After the greater part of the day had been passed, however, the wind lulled and the temperature moderated. Our animal spirits mounted proportionally, some of us determining to go to the masque ball then to take place in the "*Perseverance*," to which all, as usual, were invited, though all as usual were not going. A number of us got ready accordingly. We rigged out in our best, the oddest and most fantastic garbs we could patch up. Some had helmets on with visors, armed with wooden swords or with whale-spears, decked forth with colored paper. Some wore

the skins of animals with switching tails artificially elongated, with the mask of a seal's head, or a fox's, or a bear's. Others were habited as old women, with loose flowing calico and large, bolstered, close-fitting caps, with fans in their hands to keep them cool, while the north wind was gently blowing outside at a degree of frigidity that would turn boiling water into rock-ice quicker than in any refrigerator, and almost negatived the exertions of the fires inside. But the most comical figures of all the absurd ones there cut were the "coonies," or Esquimaux women. Tricked out in some semblance of finery, with Balmoral skirts over their usual attire, and with the tails of their cooltangs hanging below, to them it seems real grandeur, crowning the ridiculous to us, as the men in affected gallantry linked the panting little Arctic butterflies to their seats, attempting to fan them with one of the weapons of coquetry, borrowed from some swaggering "old woman" near by. And I observed that they laughed and giggled in as high glee as their white sisters could have done at any great turn-out of the rural population, to celebrate the laying of wooden pavements or the introduction of water in an American village. Nor must I forget here to relate an event of the night, equally striking and characteristic. But thereon hangs a tale on which I must be allowed to have a slight digression.

Some of Johnny Penny's friends in Britain retaining a lively interest in the little savage, who to them

had shown himself docile and winning as he really was, and "remarkably intelligent," as he really was not, had made up among them a small collection, therewith purchasing some few things which they thought would be acceptable in Esquimauxdom. Remembering the great interest Johnny Penny always had demonstrated in a watch, learning to tell the time upon its dial, and to wind one up, they had, among other things, invested in a nice gold watch, very likely conjecturing that it would be, according to Toodles, handy to have in the house anyhow, as such could be made available advantageously in the nearest pawn-brokers, in case of a necessity arising for him "to raise the wind." This they had intrusted to Captain Davidson; and he chose the occasion of New Years night and the masque ball, on which to make the present.

In the midst of the frolic, before the "midnight recess" for supper, Captain Davidson advanced upon the stage beside where the two violinists were perched, had Johnny Penny brought alongside of him, and then and there went through the ceremony of presentation. The watch particularly, among all the little nic-nacs of which he was the unworthy recipient, was his delight, the object of his pride, forming the very acme of his desires. His joy was manifest. He went around showing his delight to everybody. He opened it himself, displaying the works to all, particularly to his crowding compatriots, and he and

it became the cynosure of every Esquimaux eye, the envied of every "coonie" heart among them. Mary Penny, his ugly little wife, was at his side, happy, very possibly, in all the acquisitions of her worser half, but evidently unhappy at not herself holding the chiefest treasure, or at least one like it, if her straitened fancy could admit the idea of another just like it existing anywhere beneath the skies.

Supper was over, and the dancers and merry-makers were again gathering on the floor for another feet attack. They were filling up sets for a Scotch reel. The women were behind somewhere, and they were looked for to fill the complement. At last they were seen coming from a group they had formed forward, and each of them wearing, suspended by a string from her ear, or tied to her forelock, or fastened on her breast, some part of the machinery of Johnny Penny's watch. The case and dial Johnny still retained, "happy as a lord" who is not only satisfied with his own vast possessions, but with his power to confer unlimited happiness upon all his poor relations and hangers-on. We all looked at the happy lot as they strutted out among us, and while we opened our eyes with amazement at finding how they came to be so ornamented, we only laughed till we were tired, as all further commentary was useless. Some time after Johnny Penny showed us the case turned into a tobacco box, which was as good a use as he could put it to.

CHAPTER X.

A SOLITARY EXIT.

"How awful is Death,
Death and his brother sleep!"

AMID all the life we have been observing, a shadow deeper than that which the loss of sunlight occasioned, fell upon our vivacious little throng, engaged as above related, in spinning out the long winter's night in diversions and lightsome frolic. It seemed as if a voice "still and small," yet penetrative even to the inmost, was accompaniment, calling us to solemn pause and individual meditation.

What then could we have thought out, or what of my own abstractions can I here record, on the weighty subject of dissolution, that is not quite common-place; for is not death itself of that character? Oh, yes! it is very common-place; but somehow it has that wonderful opposite power, that it impresses those coming into close contact with it with the most profound respect and awe, belonging not at all to what is common-place. No amount of familiarity can wholly benumb the sensibilities on this score. It has here the one grand immunity kings and heroes

are forbid claiming to themselves, for none of them "can be an hero to his *valet de chambre*." Its presence amid our most intimate circle—at our very fireside, or in the very couch, mayhap, where we go for repose and a surcease from worldly cares—will not insure any of that "familiarity which breeds contempt." Oh, no! The more intimately *he* may be known by us the more awfully estranged do we become toward him, till at last, it may be, when he has claimed so much from us, we are ready in very despair, to embrace him—the inevitable—and yield up all to him, to whom we have grudged everything.

Only a short hour or two before our comrade was with us—his hopes, fears, affections, enjoyments and endurances bound up in the same bundle with ours. Now those of his had all slipped out, though tied together with ours so firmly, and we knew not how—nor could we with finger point to where they now were; nor whether or not in the great change which death effects, they had not quite disappeared or existed transmutedly. Hopes and fears, such as he erewhile had, vanished forever; and affections, enjoyments, endurances now beginning to open up for him in their essentials—the husk of Time's circumstance being cast aside!

Ah, we could not get rid very readily of the thought that there is at least one importunate creditor who was following in our wake, outside the bounds

of civilization, away into the very arctic regions, beyond the face of the sun, and who will not wait when his account is due for a more convenient season to pay it in. Festus may have been partly right when he deferred transaction of business having connection with that final settlement for a more suitable time, provided he could fully have depended upon having that at his disposal. But one cannot defer when the grim king of terrors himself issues the mandate. When his dark figure alights upon the footpath on which we must surely advance, and not turn back, there is a wall on this side and a wall on that, and there is no lofty treading of him down for "the haughty looks shall be brought low," nor yet can he be passed, for there is room but for one in the way, and *he* knows not the movement of retrogression. The waving of his sable plumage over a man brings the clammy sweat over his brow which it never knew before, and a pallor on his countenance which ere then it never wore! How solemn was his visitation among us there! Revelry and mirth-seeking were ours; but stillness and sorrow-bringing were his.

But even then sounded within our souls the beautiful service for the dead which the Episcopal church ritual prescribes, as it was read by our captain, at the mouth of the tomb which we had cut in the ice up on the hill-side; and the language which was first spoken at the door of another tomb—no matter ex-

actly where—but it was near the little village of Bethany, far over the seas—filled us with strange emotion: "*I am the resurrection and the life*," etc. And again were repeated the words of the patriarch: "*I know that my Redeemer liveth*," and they swelled in upon our drooping spirits like tidal waves of great ocean, lifting them up as upon the breast of an Eternal love. How still, though, they fell there! There was no echo to them from the ice-bound cliff above, nor from the snow-clad waste beneath. There sound—material sound—was dulled. Responsive resonances were everywhere abounding, nevertheless, within and about in impalpable ripples of consciousness. Are these ever-growing? Ever!

Tell me not of a puerile or senile class of infidels, who pursuing the *ignis fatuus* of conceit, claim this or that of themselves, to themselves, for themselves; breathing inanities! These grope at induction in the very outside of its proper domain, and assert, or *insinuate covertly*, dreamings and wild inventions for solid conclusions, when they would futilely impugn those stupendous revealed truths, presenting instead exhalations of an irate egotism, or the thick outgrowths of a besotted understanding, transferred from the graveyard of Divine Hope, or from the very malarial quagmires of their cowering fears.

Use is the *sine qua non* of every existence. Without it, implying an object, or objects outside of self, through which to perform ends, there is nothing,

nor can anything be that is. And in all things there is that double capacity manifest, to receive and to give, implying adaptation of parts, one to the other, for that purpose. Throughout Nature in all her kingdoms, this is plainly manifest—the formation of a subject denoting the object—until we come to the very lowest, that of minerals, which through untold cycles of time have abode in their places, awaiting the action of intelligent man, who at once confers upon them subjective and objective scope, forms them into suitable shapes of use, and furnishes them ultimates artificially.

And man, that class assures us, this microcosm of the universe, "this piece of work, how noble in reason, how infinite in faculty—in form and moving how *express* and admirable, in action how like an angel, in apprehension so like a god, the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals," so perfectly adapted in his physical structure for his high terrestrial destiny, must be, in solitary doom, cut down amid his budding aspirations, must be cast off from those higher aims, statelier faculties, grander powers which direct to a hereafter—to an existence infinitely more interior and real than the present, and above, or it may be below this material, where in place of matter substance ever-abiding is, and where the ultimates of character produce condition, and where acts are not mere appearances, nor what can be confounded with them.

The idea is an *argumentum ad absurdum*, and cannot be sustained. What! shall the capstone alone have no foundation? Shall, of all creation, its crowning glory alone be cut off from access to his promised inheritance, which under every disadvantageous circumstance he has retained some tradition for, and longings after? What! where universal action is, shall his efforts alone prove of no account, who is the greatest actor infinitely, on the stage? False such statements are; utterly false to the very philosophy invoked for their support, I mean *Induction*. But bright as Truth is on its heavenward side, its other, by reason of the gathering shades of evil, is necessarily very opaque. The larger and brighter Truth, the more voluminously dark its antipodals.

"From harmony to harmony this universal frame began,
From harmony to harmony through all the compass of its notes it ran,
The Diapason ending full in man"—

What! In discord, in frustrated design of what is best and loftiest? No! but still forward, forward, and upward, upward, till shall be completed creation's grand pyramid, whose topmost is above the clouds of mere speculation or of doubt, or of self-conceited ignorance, supporting there a glory uncreated, which though omnipotent, seeks support of created dependence, at the same time ordering it.

It is not surprising in the least that there should be found men strong in their own conceit, holding

such views as I have been negativing. Religion and its opposite, atheism or infidelity, are equally the property of intelligences. *Brutes* have neither the one nor the other; for no *beast* is religious, as none are irreligious. "*Whence then cometh wisdom and whence is the place of understanding?*" Explicitly, in the most ancient part of the Bible the answer is: "*He hath put wisdom in the* INWARD PARTS, *and hath given understanding to the* HEART." That settles it.

Our comrade, whose death occurred in these distant parts where we all held together so much, though coming from far separate places, had been sick all winter. The captain, who had some knowledge of medicine and surgery, and who had possession of the medicine chest, was skilled sufficiently to have charge of the hospital department, and attended him with great care. He was till near the last in hopes of getting him over his trouble; but that night on which he died he had a relapse, and while we were asleep around him, the poor fellow, feeling the clutch of death, sprang from his berth, awakening us all with a sharp cry for water, and then suddenly fell down dead before any one could get to him. We had his body laid out in state for a day or two, covered with the glorious drapery of his country's flag, on the main hatches. At his obsequies a large concourse from the different vessels attended, with a mute and respectful seriousness depicted on every

countenance; and now there he lies in most perfect embalmment in a region which affords the grandest mausoleum for preservation in the world. Ten thousand years from this, it is not too much to hazard the surmise—as we dug deep into the mound of ice and carefully sealed up the place of sepulchre—his body may be disentombed, and the very lineaments unaltered disclosed to the wondering gaze of that remote posterity! What a thought to entertain! That very face which we had been accustomed to see among us in the common duties of the ship, to be surveyed by men yet to be, so remotely and in such changed conditions to ours that we are obliged to clip the wings of fancy from further flight in imagining the incident.

But is it not a far grander, vaster idea, that after these ten thousand years shall have appeared as "yesterday when it is fled," and as but the morning of our existence, we may be able to stand upon some lofty height, some remote battlement of creation, not discoverable by the finest telescope, to recall and reiterate, like the refrain of a sounding pæan, the old words anew: "*I know that my Redeemer liveth.*"

We had one or two more deaths in the fleet before spring—each of which had a very solemn impression on me and on most of us, as we thought of the great shadow of darkness that, unperceived, they brought to the threshold of many households, and of the widows and little children left desolate; but this was the only

death we had on board our schooner. And I remarked that amid all the tough swearing, that seamen do so much indulge in, and for all the rough hard ways they so much incline to, there were many who sought the study and consolation of God's word to men, who tried to follow its teachings, and heed its warnings; toward which thought and practice, the deaths of their comrades in such solitary scene were grand ministers, beyond the admonitions and entreaties of the living. It would not have been much to our advantage, however, to have allowed our spirits to wane and wax cold before lugubrious meditations, come what might. So as soon as we could we reentered those cheerful employments and recreations, which with slight break we held continuously.

Of duty worth designating by the name of it, we had absolutely nothing to perform, although seal and walrus hunting, as they were, when successful, very good provision for the mess-table, and very requisite too as anti-scorbutics and as health-giving exercises, were from time to time, as the weather permitted, resorted to, always with the ready help of the natives, who continued holding themselves entirely at our service whenever or whatever wanted.

A party from the ship also, at intervals of a week or so, performed a journey to the nearest berg in quest of water, which they dug out of its sides in lumps of ice, and returned with a plentiful supply for about that length of time, of fine fresh water

when melted, notwithstanding the mass had lately floated in the briny deep, and that it was encrusted with a saline ice, in many cases over the entire exposed surface, and in all cases for some distance above the water of several feet in thickness; this freeness from salt of the inner parts arising from the fact of their origin among the glaciers, as detached portions of their great ice-floods. These trips were particularly enjoyable, though often such exposure to the keen cold as they caused, resulted in a frozen ear, or nose; that however was never considered so serious as to prevent the sufferer from volunteering to the next excursion, or one soon following. An "anchor watch" was also set, consisting of one of the men, each taking it in turn, who was supposed to be up and around all night, keeping the fires agoing and looking out for any accident therefrom resultant. A part of his duty was to keep what was called "the fire-hole" open. This was a hole made in the ice close to the vessel's side, from which we could draw what water we required, in the emergency of a fire taking place. Every morning, immediately after the matutinal meal, and before he turned in, the watch had to break up with a hatchet the coating of ice that during the night had formed itself over the orifice, and some one or other of us generally did the same thing for him, before turning in for the night. Except the extra cooking in the forecastle, there was nothing more I can remember, that we did about the

ship that winter, except to occupy our berths and have them filled with a good supply of skins and blankets, as well as with ourselves when the time came duly around.

I must not omit to mention one very noted achievement which we accomplished in the way of architecture, surpassing that of the most noted builders of antiquity or of modern days. We built a chapel on the ice, pulpit, seats and all, made out of the same material, and without, as in the case of Solomon's temple, the sound of a hammer being heard during the whole labor—going beyond the wonderful performance of Israel's king in this: that, neither in the original quarry nor in the building itself, was any chiseling instrument used, whereas, in the temple of Solomon, the material was laid that was elsewhere fully adjusted by means of these implements. The little temple which we raised, though meant to approach as near as possible to a Gothic pattern, proved Gothic only in the spirit of its execution—being otherwise of an original style, which the mind of its designers conceived from long contemplation—not of graceful palms or of arching forest-boughs, nor of elegant floral forms, but of Brandreth's pill boxes, several of which each individual of us had along with him, using their contents regularly, till, to save our lives for future usefulness, we threw them from us, preserving one as a model for our new edifice. It was a fine, rotund structure, without

windows, yet admitting through its transparent walls sufficient luminousness to comply with what is required in erections of the kind, that "dim religious light" which votaries of the *art of piety* consider so accessory to devotion! It was capable of accommodating about from three hundred to three hundred and fifty, but was found to be a failure for its original purpose, as the means that were needed to make it seatable were found impracticably opposed to its existence. So, like a great many such buildings in more favored lands, it was kept merely for a show, with a round ball, to block its burrow-like entrance, in place of a door.

Nor must I forget one ridiculous incident that occurred toward the latter end of the winter. We happened to be a little scant of seal-meat at this time, and our captain felt urged to try his hand at the business of procuring some. He did not meet with great success. Close at hand the seals had been getting scarce and scarcer. These creatures had doubtless found us out. We had them—in a reverse way; but it had got to be rather severe weather, about this time, for our pursuing their shy acquaintance at a prolonged distance, as they demanded, in case we desired it further. He went a good way off, we understood, but seemingly not far enough; as when he returned to the ship he brought with him but one carcass. Perhaps, after having secured that at considerable risk, he became contented to have

his own wants supplied, instead of becoming a general benefactor to any great extent. The plunder was dressed and hung up. Contrary to wont, that was all there came of it, save that some choice steaks were sliced off for private use. This the men did not quite relish, thinking:

> "Why should not conscience have vacation
> As well as other courts o' th' nation."

Shortly one of our number slipped aft and succeeded in making havoc. Taking the very best of the residue, he almost stripped the carcass and brought his spoil into the forecastle, where a royal feast was had, which was all the more highly enjoyed on the principle that "stolen waters are sweet," *sic* seal meat, broiling portions of it in the stove, frying some over it, and eating tit-bits raw!

Next morning the steward, perceiving the damages, reported the affair, and as promptly we were called aft about it. The captain was angry. We could see passion lurking in his eye, and could perceive its surging tide in his suppression of movement as he sternly confronted us—chewing tobacco with a vengeance, and turning a heavy quid around in his mouth, without uttering a word till we were all assembled. I was the first man he tackled; his suspicion pouncing upon me like a cheetah upon one of a peaceful herd: "Joe, did you cut into the seal last night?" "No, sir," I quickly replied. He said

nothing, but slid his flashing eye upon the next man with, "Did you?" The same answer was given by each man as the question was put to him, till he came to the last man among us, and one of the last he suspected. He then paused and glanced around among us in evident doubt, then turned sharply upon the individual before him, saying, "So you are the man that cut into the seal I had such hard work to get for you—without waiting till you got your share legitimately? You are the canterwalling *scamp*, are you?" "Yes, sir!" at once answered the individual so politely addressed. "How came you to steal my property, sir!—aboard my vessel, sir?" then roared the captain, by this time beginning to give vent in tone and accent. "Well, sir," replied *guilty* to this sally, "did you not tell us, when you called us aft, before Christmas, to get as much flesh meat as we could, and to take it when we could, anywhere and anyhow? I had the chance, and only obeyed orders in what I did!" It was amusing to observe the effect of this brief address in bringing down the irate pride of a thoroughly roused but highly conscientious man. The captain became quite dumbfounded and crestfallen, but hardly knew how to descend from his lofty position so illy taken. His anger was suddenly appeased, but not so easily the pride supporting it, which now tried stiffly to hold out in its position on the rear. He held the power, and that was a main point. Justice spoke to him, but power limited the

degree in which her voice was to be heeded. He illustrated the truism of Burns:

> "If self the wavering balance haud
> 'Tis rarely richt adjusted."

He ordered the offender, without more ado, for punishment drill to holystone the quarter deck for the day —a light enough penalty, yet one that proclaimed less the offence of the one undergoing it, than of him whose promulgation it was.

Another very comical incident took place also about that time, which I must not omit relating. Having by me at all times a reminder of the event, I am in no danger of letting it slip out of the satchel of my memory, but among so many things might let it get temporarily out of sight, and so neglect to furnish my readers, in this time of teetotal excitement, with one other story to enliven the subject on which mighty orators are expatiating so widely. Be it noted, however, that this tale has its black and sorrowful side, as well as its light and farcical one, and that it is didactic on its upper as it is amusing on its lower. It tends to illustrate the love of strong drink which some men have so devouring an appetite for, with apparently so unscrupulous a conscience in accompaniment, the same only too prevalent among seafaring men as a class, and among the Scotch, *it is said*, as a people.

I had for a day or two been "fashed wi' that hell o' a' diseases," the toothache, and had borne it as

long as I could, until my small and confined stock of Christian resignation had been pretty well used up. In the words of the bard, a copy of whose immortal writings I had out of the excellent library of the "*Perseverance*," I had at length come to say from my true inmost to it,

> "My curse upon thy venom'd stang
> That shoots my tortured gums alang,
> An' through my lugs gies mony a twang
> Wi' gnawing vengeance,"

and in the climax of my discontent and impatience, which this very passage accelerated, I one day rushed to the captain's cabin and invoked his aid to get rid of my torments. Without more ado he went to his chest and got out his forceps, and applying the same to my recalcitrant grinder, energetically wrenched it from its socket. The blood flowed copiously from the lacerated gum, and as I stood relieved yet martyr-like over a basin to let it run, I remarked: "Captain, I'm afraid the cold will get in!"

"Humph!" said he, "I know what you want!" and suiting the action to the insinuation, he forthwith poured out a good-sized bicker of whisky, and handed it to me with: "Young man, swallow that and you will be all right!" At that juncture I did not wait, it is hardly necessary for me to state, thinking what George Washington would have done, if such had been offered him, at any particular point in his life, whether he would have drank it all as I did, at a

draught, or only half of it, whether he would have taken it by installments or not at all. No, indeed; and as veracity is rather a hobby of mine, I am forced to confess that I drained the cup without a qualm, merely giving a slight cough as if for more after it was over, though more did not present itself. Thus armed against the ice-forming air, I went forward. Rejoining my comrades in the forecastle, I soon, in great glee, recounted to them my happy experience. One of them, a young Scotsman named Grant, pricked up his ears as he heard my relation. A bright idea struck him. He also had an objectionable molar which, for such reward of *virtue*—in the Roman sense of the word—he was prepared to have torn from its socket. Very soon this pertinacious scion of a stiff-necked race, putting some extra bandaging around his face, followed in my footsteps into the presence of the captain, and announced a similar case to mine. The captain, eying him closely, said nought, took out his forceps as before, and performed the operation as readily as had been done in the previous instance, but when Grant began to whine about the dangers of the cold, our Yankee captain merely grinned at him, and winking told him: "That little game can't be played on me—hail from too far down-east for that!"

Grant returned to the forecastle with his bound up jaws, a sadder and a wiser man; the rueful expression on his countenance as he unfolded his dis-

appointment, and the dolorous tones in which it was conveyed "to our hearing," setting the whole forecastle in a roar. Not till we were discharged and separated did poor Sandy Grant hear the last of this story; and when subject for original jesting was not in handy proximity, this little topic again and again was exploded, never failing in producing a fund of merriment. That night, I remember, we tried to comfort the poor fellow by ostentatiously offering him bread soaked in tea as an agreeable suavitory for his unriveted orifice, but we failed in getting him to join quite hearty enough in our chorus of laughter. He always stood our twitting like a man, knowing well enough that if he did not there would be little good in getting angry. At sea this is about all one can do in like circumstance. Jack must and will have his joke, picking up for the purpose, whatever may present itself among incidents around him, and woe be to the ill-humored wretch objecting. By so doing, he will only be aggravating manifoldly the evils he would eschew, and be drawing down on his head endless jokes of the roughest practical kind.

Washington's birth-day was another fête-day with us, and the American vessels made a show of bunting quite characteristic, this example followed to an extent by the others. Firing of small arms was resorted to for additional *éclat;* and entertainments both in feasting and amusements accompanied. One of the Scotsmen delivered a lecture, in which he

claimed for Scotland the blue of the American flag, and the whole British flag—"the Union Jacque" or "Jack," with the crosses of St. Patrick and St. George over it merely. He also argued that but for the independence of Scotland, so persistently and successfully maintained, Liberty would not have reached the maturescence that both in Britain and here it has; and that, of Puritanism, George Washington in his historic significance was as much an effect as Roger Williams or Benjamin Franklin, though neither of them all in any arbitrary sense, is to be identified with its passing phase of their time—Washington being by descent and tradition, a loyalist and cavalier, while the other two are by the same influences, to be regarded as rebels and roundheads. MacGregor's muse came to the front also with the following ode, highly complimentary to our nationality:

ODE ON WASHINGTON'S BIRTH-DAY.

Oh, thou, who with empyrean wing
  Dost over flightful Fancy soar,
Whisp'ring me ever more to sing
  Praises to what I most adore,
Come now once more unto me with thy dower
Of chiming utterance for jubilant hour!

More than a century agone
  This day, George Washington had birth!
Heav'n heard at length earth's piteous moan
  And lent it the essential worth,
That could, with form erect and eye elate,
A home for ravished Liberty create!

Rejoice, O distant land most blest!
  Well mayst thou hold glorious this day
As one of jubilee and rest,
  A joy thenceforth for aye!
Death can no vaunt trump forth o'er him who went
Full on thy crushing falsehoods and them rent!

See him supreme like demigod,
  Holding aloft a falling fact
Before Injustice! 'Tis the rod,
  Of his heroic prosperous act,
Threatening that as is done and heaped up wrong
Reckoning shall come tho' erewhile tarrying long!

The illustrious honor that awaits
  To greet this day, as day of days,
Within the Future's widening gates
  What mortal now may guess?—
Tho' some monitions of it onward flow
And on our souls the prospect gins to glow.

"Forth look," my muse hath beckoning said,
"'Tis *not* a distant day when o'er
The ocean wide and 'yond the spread
  Of furthest peopled mundane shore,
The prestige of this day shall tower on high,
Pointing to one who made the shackles fly,
And falsehoods, that encrusting Right still lie
Upon the millions, like fanned chaff to hie!

"And by the name of WALLACE wight
  GEORGE WASHINGTON'S shall brightly stand
After Oppression has ta'en flight,
  From every groaning, despoiled land,
And sceptred kings and emperors have become
But carpet-baggers, without place or home,
Excepting what to all men else may come
Without the blow of trump or roll of drum."

CHAPTER XI.

SPRING-WHALING.

So the lengthy winter night passed along very agreeably, unmarred by quarrels or misunderstandings of any kind. Latterly, however, we found the monotony beginning to tell; and some of our most elaborate attempts at the production of sensation hung fire on this account, merely a flash in the pan coming from the well loaded gun, and the well directed aim.

Active life of diverse stamp began to be anticipated by us; and proportionately our interest in what had so well served our turn in the interlude of enforced repose began to die out, as premonitory symptoms of the return of Phœbus commenced to be anxiously looked for. At length, a little preceding noon one day, somewhere about the termination of April, or in the beginning of May—I forget which now—the sky in the north-east, away at the head of the gulf, assumed brighter tints. The next day, a little ahead of the same time, it became still brighter, and the temporary radiance became of longer continuance. A golden lurid flush became diffused over the whole eastern canopy, the sombre leaden aspect

of the entire area of gulf and shore undergoing meet transformation, and all of us correspondingly aroused, as if from beneath the heavy pressure of a prolonged dream. This increment of glow advanced daily till soon Sol himself once more deigned to show his welcome, rubicund, honest visage peeping atop of a low-lying ridge in the region designated.

Ah, then we stood like Persian fire-worshipers at time of Beltane, engaged in acts of adoration and homage to the great luminary—gazing at him with suppressed emotion—reflecting in our countenances the effulgence of his presence—each with heart fully atune for some grand pæan or choral hymn to his honor, wanting only the genius to lead and give fit expression to our swelling emotions.

Shy and fearful of the venture of showing himself to us at first, as a coy maiden of her admirers, after briefly skirting a small portion of the horizon, he quickly popped out of our sight; but gradually acquiring masculine boldness, as it were, in a few days his stay was very noticeably longer, thus more familiarizing himself with his humble votaries. Rapidly then his regal ascension developed in salutary strides. The arc described by him in his diurnal course, by great leaps or expansions became wider and wider, missing, however, what seemed to us a commensurate nascence in attitude. The segment he thus described became an half circle, till in the same ratio of progress a converse half was created;

and the whole circle completed, he then made in our sight the "grand rounds" of the heavens, marking out before us the spaces of day and night, without our waking eyes ever losing sight of him, or of the light he disseminated, except, it might be, when directed to other objects, or in a darkened compartment somewhere; and without any obscuration or diminution of his lustre save when clouds or a storm intervened.

But long ere the amplification of this splendid phenomenon of the polar regions, we were engaged in the pursuit of our avocation proper, and up to the eyes in business, and over head and ears in whale-oil. With the return of the sun's warmth, the icy fetters of winter began to relax their hold upon surrounding Nature, and we also to escape from their hard fastenings. The sun had not yet caused the brief equinox here observed, when the vast field of ice with which the whole ocean, including fiord and inlet, was overspread, gave tokens of breaking up. Great rumbling noises like those of distant thunder, or "the voice of many waters," came booming on our ears. These became more distinct, and as if from points closer to us, till they reverberated like discharges of field artillery from single guns, then as from batteries, and like firing, then as volleys, like those of an advancing host formed in line of battle in our immediate vicinity, who were pouring into us missiles of death and destruction. Then betimes a

thrill, sharp and quick, communicated itself to the timbers of our vessels, and we felt it like an electric shock; but still we abode in our places. Cracks became visible around us, extending connectedly for sweeping spaces, but no consequent fissure, for long, was detected in our neighborhood. The ice around our vessel was thick and land-locked, and would not budge before a clearance was effected in the offing.

A survey from the masthead, however, soon set us astir. "*Open sea in the gulf!*" was the sentence proclaimed one morning, potent—more potent than the cry of "*To prayers! To prayers!*" echoing from the summit of a minaret in some mosque of Islam; and, with latent energies, called suddenly by it into play, we prepared to "seize time by the forelock," according to the illustrious example of the Arabian seer, who, when the mountain failed to come to Mahomet, Mahomet condescended to waive ceremony and hesitation alike, and went to it.

About eight miles ahead, the gulf was clear; and, in that clear space there, many signs of the presence of whales were soon manifested. Thither at once we prepared to proceed in the light skirmishing array of our boats, until such time as the ships, being freed, could join us in the full panoply and the appurtenance of war. Considerable disadvantages might be anticipated from this mode of operations; but it was leaving to the future development of events to decide whether or no a miscarriage in

our designs would be a *sequitur* bringing regret, and we much preferred risk every way, to lying inertly in wait for tardy liberation from the ice.

Our company of migration consisted of eight boats' crews; and with the boats and the necessary trappings for capturing the animal, securing its blubber, transporting it to the ship, etc., etc., we accordingly set forth in our journey over the ice to the clear water. The boats, with accoutrements and utensils inside, were strapped firmly on the large, flat dog-sledge, with an Esquimau seated in the bow of each for driver. The men went generally afoot, walking or jogging along by the sledges, which were drawn at a slow pace to suit the pedestrians, and in case of accident to secure assistance. But we went steadily on without any hindrance till, before we got to the flaw-edge, a violent storm of snow suddenly came on, wreaking itself upon us and staying our march. It became dreadfully cold. I felt as if I were freezing, and a drowsiness fell upon me. I grew stupid, and benumbed in my senses, as I wearily dragged along. I knew very well that, if given way to, these sensations were the prelude to an eternal repose, so I buffeted them as well as I could. Some others were likewise in the same predicament.

We came before long to a dead halt, and having got our boats in a position near enough to the flaw for an easy launch next day, our arrangements for

camping out were soon finished. The dogs were unharnessed and the sledges unburdened. The boats were placed parallel, with broadside to the wind; and crouching down on their lee-side—their windward being tipped up—we awaited supper, each boat's crew having with them their own cooking-stove—a small stove-pipe sort of arrangement, similar to what is used by plumbers for soldering. This was now lit—the fuel used being seal-fat—and coffee was got ready. This, with eight days' rations of cooked pork frozen, and hard tack in no stinted quantity, was what we had to depend on. So when the coffee was poured out we had such a meal as put new mettle into us.

With what hearty gusto we did relish that coffee! Never to me was a mug of any beverage so palatable and generally acceptable. After a weary march, lying out of a biting cold night, in an open field, with the gate torn off its hinges and the fences swept away, or doing guard in a muddy trench, or standing picket on a chilly river-bank, I have had opportunity of discovering the exhilarating effects, on the human system, of the grateful decoction; but never in all my former, nor indeed, later experience, have I found equal occasion to know its emollient properties, and so be thankful for material comfort. A man has, in fact, to suffer hardship in order to have his eyes opened to many enjoyments and blessings which ordinarily crowd his path un-

noticed. Asperity is the best trainer for luxury, though it is scarce one that luxury would spontaneously engage to act in any capacity about her, save as a looker-on. It is the original manufactory, within itself, of the prime sauce so much valued as a condiment, and so much beyond the reach of those who most esteem it for its digestive properties, etc., viz: *hunger*.

After this reflection I fastened the hood of my cooltang tightly about my head and face, crept into my little bed, consisting of a sealskin bag, drew its folds closely together, fastening it up, at the neck, and went to sleep, with a small clump of snow, by the gunwale of the boat, for a pillow. The others, either giving or taking the example, we all resembled shortly, as the snow-drift settled around and over us, so many hummocks of that powdery matter dotting the bleak waste, like graves covered by one great white shroud.

That is what is called "*bagging out*," this characteristic phrase being, in the nomenclature of seamen, a substitute for "*camping out*," in the phraseology of soldiers. It is to be unqualifiedly recommended to hypochondriacs as an excellent tonic and restorative for all visionary ailments.

I have no precise idea how long we remained in that situation, for there are times when coffee is an excellent soporific, particularly so when abundant exercise is had before it, and plenty is eaten along with

it. We were awakened by some "thundering loud" reports, and an agitation of all around like the heavings of an inceptive chaos. Every one quickly released himself of his "sacking"—every one except myself, I believe; for I struggled hard with my "fixings" and could not untie them. The stupor of sleep, the confusion of the scene and the trepidation it caused, the penetrativeness of the cold, all conspired against me. A dark fate seemed then to me somewhat imminent. The ice from the storm was being broken up into floes and fragments, when I might speedily be separated from my companions, by being carried off by one or tipped into the water among the debris. Isolation or immersion were, either of them, dreadful to contemplate. A vision to that effect, just in time, I think, floated across the disc of my mental camera, and I promptly surrendered the pride of self-reliance by calling lustily for help. There was quite a din and my voice could not far be heard; but as good luck would have it the rest were yet all round, and the captain hearing me, stooping down, did not wait to extricate in any other way, than by lifting me as he would a carcass, and heaving me into the boat, at the bottom of which, I, a little more leisurely, got myself unloosed, when out I jumped again, taking my station along with the others to grapple the emergency we were facing.

We had to cogitate what best had to be done. The waves, as they came surging up to, and sweep-

ing over the flaw-edge, did not admit of one taking to the water as from a sloping beach. We would not be able to keep our feet in the surf, so as to effect a launch among the breaking billows. The boats moreover would certainly be stove in, if we so far succeeded in the attempt; and likely with the loss of all hands engaged. Two alternatives, exactly, appeared practicable. The former was to wait where we were till the ice broke up *into pieces* about us, and afforded in that condition protection against the full head of the waves; but the danger then would be very great from pack ice which would probably form, and from collision with wandering swirling portions which we would be exposed momentarily to encounter. The latter alternative was to turn back and reach a spot of security on the ice behind, and beyond the lines of commotion and smash. This latter was decisively adopted as the more feasible, and instant action followed it. To get the boats again mounted upon and lashed to the sledges, these with the dogs harnessed to them, and the Esquimaux drivers in their places of authority, hallooing and yelling like maniacs, while our own men ran alongside holding on, or pushing forward, was the work of less time than is spent in the relation thereof. We had been a good while doing our utmost—"*our level best*" in getting over the same distance, which now when *put to it* and doing our "*speedy best*," we passed over in a few minutes, resembling in rapidity,

more that singular production of Nature, known out west as "greased lightning" than anything I ever saw, unless it was a thoroughly henpecked husband doing his wife's messages.

As we hurried over it the ice was in perceptible motion under and around us, and each moment we fully expected to have to get into the boats, leaving the sledges to the fury of the elements, when we should encounter some wide fissure or crevasse crossing our way; but we managed to get over that untenable part before it became untraversable, and when we fairly found ourselves secure, we came to a halt, set a watch, and again "bagged out" till morning, or till we had a little more of the needed refreshment sleep produces.

The storm during the night had spent itself, and when, with the bright sun above the horizon for an hour or two before, we arose from our icy pallets, a most beautiful prospect greeted us. The sky was now serene. A gentle breeze, the dying breath of the late gale, was blowing chilly, but not ruthlessly so. The waves were rolling in, large and full, upon the flaw, the surf beating high over it, about three hundred yards ahead. And beyond we could discern by the spouting and the tumbling of huge dark masses in the waters, and of flukes lifted high in the air, that out in the clear water whales had arrived, in as great plenty as pumpkins in a field in autumn, and were holding a carnival, to which, by

those same signs and tokens, we reckoned ourselves invited guests. "Such a kettle of fish I never saw," I involuntarily ejaculated, though at the time I was informed or reminded that whales are no more fish than a gulf is a kettle. *Mem.:* Item of information for the reader.

They seemed present, so the old sailors testified, at this time, in unusual numbers. Not only were there "schools" of them, but, if our eyes were any infallible guides to a conclusion, and going from the lesser to the greater, as accustomed, we might say that whole seminaries and colleges were there, disporting or disputing or holding seances before us, in which discussion opened out upon some such subject matter, I suppose, as was "*very like a whale.*"

Truly it was a magnificent and engrossing sight, to behold the merry gambols, and eccentric frolics of the live-mountains, as they dipped and tossed and skimmed and floated and spouted, "by their generations, after their families," taking their morning baths amid the dancing waves, in the glad sunshine; and it was a sight as well calculated to rejoice the hearts as to sharpen the faculties of those veteran sportsmen of the seas, far beyond the puny enjoyment had by the huntsmen of the land, whose eyes are cleared of their mists, and whose blood tingles at the sight of a herd of trifling buffalo, or a covey of insignificant partridges. Here the dimensions of the prey and the unlimited sweep of its area, placed our

pursuit in superlative position among all other sports of the kind. Our eyes fairly glistened with ecstasy, and our blood bounded as if from fresh fountains, while we viewed the glorious scene; and all along the flaw-edge we discerned groups of several ships' companies engaged in similar prospective, while, in the crystalline atmosphere, parties around the ships were plainly visible to us as they were preparing for a start in our direction.

I noticed the captain and mate of our vessel shaking hands together to denote their glee, as they chuckled forth the fullness of their contentment with appearances in the gulf. In the excitement I shared, feeling very like shouting to give vent to my exuberant spirits. Our little assemblage on the ice at this juncture resembled, I have thought, more than anything, a band of Methodists at a revival-meeting, only there were conspicuously absent the penitents, and some of the *nautical* phraseology in use was not such as these good people are ever in the habit of employing—i. e., being *naughty* as well.

Orders were at once issued for hot coffee to be served; and though our appetites were not sickly, the *déjeuner* was of short duration. "*Clear the boards for action!*" was the motto we saw held up before us visionarily; and we cleared them.

After, we looked about for some indenture in the flaw, close to us, where we could more readily,

as well as safely, launch without having to face the breakers coming in rather stoutly yet. A little off we found one—a long gap filled with waste similar to what is seen in January or February in the ferry slips of the North River. Thither we slid our small armament. The boats were safely lowered into the mimic bight or "creek;" and by dint of hauling, prying, progging, pulling and of some tough swearing, very dispensable, we got them into clear water. Hurrah! but it was jolly to be heaved by the waves once more!—to be tossed by them like a child in the arms of its toying nurse—now skyward with a reckless pitch, anon falling downward into their soft and yielding trough!

We soon bounded out among them, and found the whales *all right*. Strong in the rugged fortalice of their own unparalleled might and unmatched dimensions, we discovered our cetacean quarry, not at all apt at harboring suspicion. They did not seem to think it worth while to keep any look-out as gregarious animals customarily do—yet if danger were disclosed to any of them, we knew that in some mysterious way the tidings would be communicated to the others, and the whole "*school*" taking alarm, would scatter on a holiday excursion, or to play truant; so we moved among them with caution. We wanted to get well out from the ice before making an attack, not wishing to run the eminent hazard of losing our prey after having hooked it. Giving

them for the present a wide berth, and at the same time steering clear of the detritus of ice near the flaw, we set sail, making toward the mouth of the gulf, till we were out a good deal further, I should judge, from the ships than we had gone in a previous day's journey. We were about five or six miles from the flaw when we slackened our sheets for reconnoissance. Great floes and numberless small cakes of ice were floating all around, threatening to impede operations, and these seemed to signify to us that our movement was somewhat premature. But as at this time clear water, entirely divested of these erratic encumbrances, could nowhere in these regions be lit upon, and as we were now fully pledged to the course we were in, we had only to reconcile ourselves to its difficulties, or the menacing obstructions, as best we could.

Nor was it either a matter entirely for our own deliberation and conclusion whether we should or no. At least so it appeared to us, even if we did entertain some misgivings. For the other ships' crews were out, scattering over the same waters, and some of them within a few stone-throws of us, and it amounted to being under the orders of an admiral of the fleet to have them so disposed. We dare not show to them the white feather typical of retreat. Our moral courage was not strong enough for that; and from the first this idea was impellant. Besides, was not our blood really up, and were we not as

eager as any to make the first capture? So we thoroughly repudiated this whispered hesitancy. Forward then we dashed, not thinking out the matter in this way, or to the extent noted, only feeling the cogency of the argument *pro and con* in a dumb way.

About one quarter of a mile ahead, we discovered a spout. It we took for a gage of battle. Immediately hauling aft the sheet, we bore down on it with a fine headway. We were accompanied by a boat manned and womaned by the natives, in their usual array—the rest of our boats having paired off in different directions. This was the *modus operandi* at such times: one boat, whichever of the two might happen to acquire the lead at the moment, making the assault, and the other standing by either to second it, if in any degree needed, or to render what help might become necessary. Where whales are plentiful, this is most generally the course adopted, but two boats, from the same vessel, engaging in an attack upon the same animal, though some other lacking success in independent effort, may be available, if within hail.

Arriving first at the whale's side, our steersman promptly telegraphed that fact to his whaleship by the discharge of a harpoon that entered his back, quickly following it with another attached over the gunwale, by a running noose, with the line of the former, which, tightening when thrown, formed a kind

of bifurcation; thus giving us a double hold. At the same instant, as the missile went from the hand of the thrower, our sail was rolled up, the mast "unstepped," and stowed away, while the startled monster began gathering himself up for flight.

By an acquired headway we sheered by him and out of the reach of his dangerous flukes, that flung aloft as lightly as if they had formed the appendage of a "lightsome swallow;" and we now stood ready for *the race*, "with our loins girt," as it were. Our consort had shied off a point or two, on seeing us engage, and was now watching with slackened sheet. Quick as a bolt the whale now plunged down, our boat feeling the sudden jerk at her prow, and taking a precipitate dive as if likewise about making a descent. But she soon righted, and turning at a right angle followed in the direction with increasing speed. The steering was under management of able hands, now fully employed in handling, as well, the line around the loggerhead. In fact, steering in an absolute sense, was out of the question when we were being pulled straight on, but still something could then be done by way of modifying the course we *had* to traverse, and that was accomplished. Pieces of ice swimming in our direct track were descried from a distance as we approached, and avoided as carefully as could be—the boat threading her passage with the nicety and precision exemplified by an expert sword-dancer.

The whale did not at once make for the ice, as was to be somewhat dreaded, but shot out in about an even line for the northern promontory of the entrance to the gulf; and our race became exciting and grand. We cut the waves without the least regard to consequences, furnishing them with crests when deficient of them, and when thus supplied, scooting through these in a blinding net. What a glorious transportation a whale-steed affords! Few of my readers have enjoyed it, I venture to suppose. Let me recommend it to them as both novel and entertaining!

At length a pause occurred in our rapid natation, and he—our ocean courser—began to ascend for breath, and we to haul in upon the line to be near him when he appeared. This he did in a brief interval, but we were not quick enough, for when he came to the surface we were too far off to have been able to deliver any further compliment by hand, which is the surest way. We had then resort to the bomb-gun, carried in our bows. From it we discharged a lance about fifteen inches in length, having an India-rubber feather at its nigh extremity to keep it balanced in its arrowy flight. No effect was apparent, though several times we repeated the discharge; and he now went skimming along the surface while it was with great difficulty we managed to hold our own with him.

Turning sharply around, as if at a street-corner, and nearly causing us to careen by the abruptness of

the movement, he once more descended, taking a trend to the eastward. At great speed we followed, letting the line out sparingly; and when after a brief lapse he again mounted to the top, we contrived to be closer to him than before, having hauled in upon him with fury.

We were now ready to handle him, but getting sight of us, away he darted before the fatal blow could be directed. His renewed, terrified impulse now made the line spin out rarely, and we began to entertain fear that he was going to escape from us entirely, when again he turned—this time doubling somewhat on his course, which slackened the line so that we could haul in without stint for a spell. We did so until again disappointed by a dive he made. We had to follow as best we could. Then as he again sought the surface, at hauling in of the line we went, until it became questionable to us whether these renewed efforts were more exhaustive of his resources or of ours. His speed was now perceptibly dwindling, but on the other hand our efforts were palpably feebler.

It was now at any time in his power, if his instincts, unblinded by excitement, had been commensurate to his desperate necessities, to have secured his freedom from the sustained persecution, by running us full tilt with shortened line against some floe too large to be circumvented. Nothing would then have remained for us to do, but to cut the line and

leave him to rejoin his messmates, with the ornamentation of two irons sticking out of his blubber, or to find a retired nook in the ocean where to die like a whale. But his instincts were not equal for the manœuver and our ill-luck did not *seem* thus far to prevail; and so with the bright *ignis fatuus* of our hopes still dragging us hither and thither delusively, as upon a marshy common, we kept up the chase. For eight long hours the inconsiderate creature thus pulled us about the gulf.

Coming to the surface at last; not far from the flaw-edge we just got alongside, near enough to render with excellent effect the long-delayed stab. The lance was thrown into a vital part. His blood as it rose in torrents from his blow-holes gave token of the efficiency of our stroke. Now, we thought, we had him! His "flurry" in all its wild, mad rage and splurge had set in; when plunging with a final strain beneath the rim of the ice, he managed after all to elude our further notice, donating his precious body, by the act, to his submarine acquaintances—not fellows—for whales do not eat one another, nor do they bestow a funeral upon one of their number who departs. What moral did he leave us? "*First catch your whale*," etc.

The sharp edge with which the rope came in contact as he went under, cut it like a razor, saving us the trouble of doing so, and we stood looking at the hole in the water which he had made and had closed

after him, much as a Skye-terrier is observed eying a rat-hole when a playful tail wags its farewell, within a smell and a half of his nose. It could not indeed be helped that after all our wearying exertions this finale should come. It was a comfort our philosophy afforded, very remedial for disappointment to reflect, that we had done better than to succeed merely, as we had won the *desert* of success—but it was a pretty cold desert without any warm precedent.

We could only turn us to the aid of our more fortunate companions, who were busily towing to the flaw-edge a capture made some way out. We joined in lending them our hand in securing it. Then lighting our stoves we cooked our coffee, had supper and smoked our pipes, during which latter operation we caught the poor whale over and over again, in more than half a dozen different ways and times, and lost him, too, but this last act always ended in one way, viz., that in which it happened. And "bagging out" for the night, we got asleep to dream of catching more whales which did not escape from us, some of them too, among corn-fields four thousand miles away, where bright eyes and soft hands seemed present, giving inspiration to our daring and tendering help to us in environing troubles.

After a few hours' rest, or next morning if you choose, we got back again upon the Greenland coast, cutting in with the assiduity of ants on a garbage heap of half one handful, loading the sledge with the

blubber and whalebone, to be conveyed to the vessel. A number of us returned along with it on board, there to "*try-out.*" I was among the number. To work we went with a will as soon as we reached the schooner. There was no time lost. Cutting and slicing, hauling and pulling, "trying-out," and stowing away—these were our whole ends of life while the work lasted. Eating and sleeping were in the way, but they had to be attended to *perforce.*

Rather more than a week was thus consumed—the details relating to which I have given above. Extra rations of grog were served out and our supply of food was unlimited. So the work, though hard and constant, was done merrily—with song and with jest. I think we were then, perhaps, inwardly counting the profits and taking our shares.

When I resumed duty in the clear water again, little change, I noticed, had taken place on the ice. The edge had been broken up a little, and the melting process on the surface of it had progressed, but the great field remained intact as yet, with all our vessels locked up within it. It was then a fine bright moon. The whole expanse was flooded with light. Out in the gulf before us were the boats—some in full chase, others making stealthily upon their prey, while others were moored along the ice, with groups near by digging into the black-skinned blubber, or stripping the last fragments of "blanket" from naked islands of flesh. Between the fleet and these

were strings of sledges, like market drays near a city, passing to and fro, these going in the direction of the vessels with heavy loads of blubber, and moving at a steady pace, those returning to the seaboard light and passing swiftly along, the dogs at full canter, and the little manikin of a driver waving his redoubtable sign of authority over their heads in high glee. I chose a ride back along with my friend Johnny Penny, who was on the express between our ship and the open sea. "*Horses*" were still the amusing topic of his muse, and the never changing chorus of his little song, and he made me laugh till the tears rolled down my cheeks like streamers from the basket of a balloon, as he dilated upon their superiority to dogs, and lectured upon their habits graminivorous.

As a consequence of the profuse light induced by constant efflux from the sun, and by reflection from the snow and ice, ophthalmia appeared among us. Many of our men suffered severely from the painful disease; most were affected by it more or less, and some by it were temporarily incapacitated from work. Green glasses were resorted to as a means of amelioration of the evil, and both as a cure and preventive. I found them of great efficacy; and my eyes, which had been getting badly inflamed, so that I could hardly get a square look-out, soon improved after wearing them.

Our men had met with but poor luck in my absence. Nothing had been captured. Some boats'

crews had been on the war-path, and had only succeeded in losing, after strenuous essays, their tackle and irons, by their undetained prisoner slipping under the ice as before, in case given.

With my invaluable experience, I now resolved that it was "my mission" to come to the rescue, and to help to retrieve our waning fortunes. Accordingly, I took my place on the thwart, determined to do some execution, and to aid in the *fait accompli.* Making the oars spring again as we raised them for another stretch and pull, we set our little arrowy skiff a-flying whither we saw some spouting going on out toward the mouth of the gulf. It was a long way off, and as there was no wind, it was very severe work to pull so far, but we were chiefly anxious that our sally should not be in vain, and were resolute in the toil. The speed with which we nervously started could not be sustained all the way without expending our strength before the trial, so after the spurt at starting, we got into a regular stroke that was not exhaustive, and good time was made by it.

In about two hours we arrived at the projecting point, and from a "*school*" innocently and industriously engaged in spouting lessons, we selected one we thought had been long enough in the class to acquire full proficiency, and was well qualified to afford light to humanity in another *form* higher up. We fixed our irons into his capacious juicy blubber, giving the school by that token, signal for recess.

Away he hurried, and away we skurried after him, right on our "home stretch." We had no objection to the course he adopted. It was securing us less trouble to pull him in that he should have his indispensable "flurry" nearer the ice than where we were when he was struck. We knew it was impossible for him to swallow up the distance before ascending for breath, and we calculated on the death-blow being administered before he could reach the ice. The water was now much freer from floating ice than on the former occasion cited, and we had a magnificent run.

Up again he came and we close to him! Rip, bang, from the hands of the captain went the lance! He struck him, but failed to make the blow an effectual one. A mortal part had evidently not been touched, though going close upon it. Off at a tangent from us scoured our *detenu*, bringing us diagonally on the very path of another vessel's boat, which had a little previously grappled with another whale.

"Cut your d—d line, ——," roared our irate captain, in impatient wrath at the ill-omened mischance. "Cut yours and be ——" was the elegant response still more volubly uttered, which came booming back to us. Louder and less distinct became the resonant noises of complimentary epithet in the shape of sulphur-smelling imprecation bandied from each to the other. Collision grew to be almost inevitable. One of us *had* to give way, or

both would go to pieces. Our consorts' boats were all a good way off, we observed. Our opponent's were near at hand. We could not afford longer to hesitate and risk immersion. The Scotch are the most mulish people under the sun and our opponents were Scotch. Their swearing was in Scotch, and I think their *whisky* was Scotch itself.

With rage foaming from his compressed lips and flashing from his dangerous eye, our captain at length seized the hatchet from the bows, flourished it aloft as if to take the scalp-lock from his adversary's mallet-head—and in the next instant brought it sharply down by the gunwale. As if by a sudden jerk we found ourselves free from our propellant force, and adrift without our prize. What a chagrin it was! but how thoroughly we vented our disappointment toward the stubborn blockheads who were obliging us to gulp down what we could not spit out of it!

Yet was this all unreasonable in us. These men, we knew right well, had nothing more to do in bringing about the untoward occurrence than ourselves. They had no bridle in their steed's mouth any more than we had in ours. Neither of us was the aggressor—but the purposes of both accidentally jarring caused personal feelings at once to explode, as if from some secret blast-hole. That blast-hole always exists in our natures too. It is selfishness. Just put the match of opposing interests to that, almost anywhere, and you will have what is inmost

come outmost with a retort sounding very like the roar of a brute.

It was with considerable less of "spring" to "the bending oars" that we rowed back again to where we started from. I felt quite chopfallen. My boast had been rather vociferously proclaimed with the good humor of expectant success. My braggadocio, of course, had been affected and spoken in careless and jocular style; but I did not quite relish facing the comrades on the ice with whom I had so joked. They twitted me considerably, but I had not much to say back, only reflecting and pondering upon the uncertainty of everything sublunary, from the bird in the bush to the whale in the gulf, making, I think, in those two, as complete a parenthesis of animal life as the wise king of Israel made of vegetables when he wrote of "everything that groweth, from the hyssop that creepeth upon the wall to the cedar of Lebanon."

We were very tired when we returned to our bivouac on the ice, after the exercise and excitement futilely expended, and partook of our collation very quietly, allowing for once the whales to blow out in the gulf without competition from such "small fry" as we. "Bagging out," we again spent the night in a cool, refreshing sleep, not altogether dreamless, a stiff breeze springing up in the meantime.

Whales are not always the tame creatures—so far as showing an offensive front is concerned—that

my description heretofore represents. I saw one boat's crew, not far off from us, get a capsize, a most beautiful toss in the air, from the upturned flukes of one. This sort of ærial voyaging is very exciting, let me remark, *en passant*—balloon-trips are nothing to it. The company, on the occasion alluded to, were all picked up by their companion boats close at hand, and the whale was ultimately secured by them, the boat being righted with some damage sustained, and several men hurt more or less.

Our repeated assaults, generally unsuccessful in anything but risk, made the whales soon to become very shy of us, and also resulted in bringing down our confidence in dealing with them, from the height at which it stood on that morning when we had our first view of them. They grew to be much scarcer too, from such draught being made upon their numbers, and no doubt also from many of them seeking "pastures green" in localities unhaunted by the vile presence of waspish little bipeds, who, attacking in clusters, turn themselves—to the whalish vision and understanding doubtless—for that purpose into automatical surface-swimming *apparati*.

We were now forced to the use of extra trouble and care, in tipping them the compliment of a harpoon. It was very annoying to have such a state of things extant with us, but as we had but one way of communicating with them, and no means at all of producing in their perturbed minds, a calm such as

we desired should there reign, we had to simply "accept the files" such as circumstances compelled, and set forth when we got ready.

Some time after a signal was made by one of our boats out in the gulf, that gathered us all like cormorants in her wake. We were soon alongside of her. A whale which had heretofore been badly injured from an abortive assault of one of the other ships' crews had been now picked up by them and easily finished. The harpoon first imbedded in the body was there with the ship's name cast on it, but the capture was ours indisputably. We looked upon possession as our full right, only prudentially keeping the thumb of discreet silence upon a subject which *might* result in disturbance. How I wished it could only have been the name of the barque "*Kate*" of Aberdeen that was there. It would have given some of us hallowed satisfaction if it had.

When we had succeeded in towing the remains to the flaw-edge we "cut in" as usual. Just at this juncture however an obstacle presented. We were prevented from transportation of the blubber to the schooner, in the way hitherto accomplished, by the ice between us and her being broken into floes or fragments, for nearly two miles inward; and between us broad channels and choked up troughs interposed. Across these it was impossible for sledges to be run, and we had only hope that the boats might be able to thread their ways through them until a connective

point would be reached, where in case of a clearance taking place, the sledges might be again employed continuously for a time, or whether or not for the transport of what we could get ready at once.

We accordingly left the blubber on the ice, while we looked for a suitable course, but failed to discover one. Then for a while we were content to await changes that might soon create one or liberate our vessels. But none such occurring within a reasonable lapse, we were obliged during the interval to use the blubber for fuel. These conditions of life continuing, we persisted in the waste. There was evidently no use in attempting more of the business of whaling, delightful as was the sport, at the risk of life and limb and property, and for no gain except that of excitement. For consolation, the others out were compelled to be as non-productive as ourselves, and some of them, illy-provided as "the foolish virgins," assisted us dexterously enough in the business of demolition. The blubber of the whale, being used by us all for heating ourselves, as well as for cooking our food, and sheer recklessness being called in to boot, did not hold out very well; but before long we approached exhaustion of supply.

We could only converse now with the fleet by signal, and as our language of sign was very limited, we had not much information from them, except that there was no immediate prospect to those there of speedy extrication. This we learned with grief, as,

if they could only be emancipated, they would at once relieve us from a position of jeopardy and enable us to re-enter the relinquished pursuit with enhanced facilities.

Presently the great floe upon which we were stranded began to move outward. The unstable landmarks shifting in relative position, so informed us. More room also amid the ice aback was inferred, and we prepared to take advantage of the budding opportunity by getting our boats through it.

They were manned, our impedimenta being placed within, the sledges floating behind. Getting round the floe, we entered an open passage by which we were able to advance till we were once more on solid ice, and an uninterrupted path lay between us and our wooden homes. We hastily threw up the sheltering vallation of a snow bank a few feet in height around our bivouac, and there remained for some time, while the loose ice cleared off, expecting that by then our vessels would be out; but no sign of their liberation appearing, we became thoroughly impatient of the procrastination evinced by nature, and decided upon all uniting to cut a channel for them to pass through.

Work was instantly begun, like an inspiration demanding no delay, and with the use of upright saws rigged under derricks made of spars, the work went on apace rapidly. Where the ice proved too thick for the working of the saws, blasting with

powder was resorted to; and the cakes of ice thus sawed or blasted were disposed of by sinking the edges so that they reached the lower side of the intersected sheet, and were overlapped by it—then forcing the pieces down and forward till they were safely ensconced underneath. When too massive and unwieldy for this treatment, they were hauled round to the outer verge and there sent adrift.

In six days' time our conjoint labors were completed, the ice around the several vessels cut out—extemporizing a dock for them in which to float—and they were then towed, one after the other, into the open water.

The ice began now to disappear all around, and our vessels, with their "winter wrappings" taken off and laid past, their housings dismantled and stowed away, their sailing gear having come to light instead, were moving about upon the clear waters "like things of life and of beauty," sadly besmirched as their beauty was. They did *not*, mayhap, look very spruce; they were rather dingy and clumsy, in fact; but finer, grander, more soul-stirring than any sight which had greeted our eyes in a long time, was to us the view of our little fleet—our brave, gallant, little fleet—riding once more upon the dancing waves and toying with their crests, each vessel with its flotilla of boats around it, consisting of its own and those of the adherent natives.

We soon began prowling around after some more

whales. Nine altogether since our arrival in Greenland were the number we had tackled, but of them only two had been secured. The other seven had escaped, every one of them, beneath the ice, taking with them a goodly quantity of line, and about twice their number of harpoons. We had still quite a deficit in our intended cargo, and as we were anxious to get home at as early a day as possible, we wished to lose no time in filling up. Having, owing to the loss of our tender, an inadequate supply of casks at our disposal, we lacked the means to carry up to the figure of our full tonnage; but what oil could be got from a good-sized whale, or a couple of small ones, we had accommodation for, and did all but whistle for the appearance of such, within bow-shot, as we roamed about searchingly.

Some weeks after the liberation of the schooner we encountered what we were in quest of so wistfully. Just as we were sitting down to supper the man at the mast-head gave the warning. My jack-knife was in my hand, ready to cut into some fine, fat porcine flesh or "blubber," in front of me, and my pannikin of steaming-hot coffee was on my box at my side, when "*A whale off the port-beam!*" arrested the contemplated motion. Up we skurried, and into our boats as fast as we could tumble, where we quietly sat till the captain's glass was removed from the object; orders at once following. Two boats got under way with sails set. When we got up with the whale

he was still lounging luxuriously, blowing his spouts as a school-boy does his pipe-and-bubbles, only on a much larger scale. Two of our boats, in almost the same instant, threw at him their harpoons, and the next were seen with mast "unstepped" and oars "peaked," tearing after him like marine comets. We, in one of the boats following, strove to keep up with the racers, but utterly failing, we only gained ground when hauling in on the line commenced, preparatory to the creature coming up to blow. We by that time got close enough to witness the impact of the weapon which was dexterously dealt. Two rapid discharges from the hand of the captain—this time also the captain of the schooner—found their way to mortal parts, and no mistake; for torrents of blood immediately flowing, incarnadined the waters all around, proclaiming this fact.

After a superb splurge, in which his magnificent writhing ground up the briny liquid into comminuted particles of froth, and set it seething around as within a boiling caldron, his "flurry" terminated, and the spoil extended itself before the victors "fin out," or "dead as a herring." We signaled the vessel, which was lying to, a mile or two off, and waited until she bore down upon us, which she did promptly.

Making the carcass fast alongside, we sprang aft for grog—a full ration being supplied with double allowance to the two leading boats' crews, and then we went forward to conclude the meal so inauspi-

ciously commenced. Having hurriedly this discussed, we began operations at once. As before described, the blubber was cut into "blanket-pieces" from a staging summarily raised midships on the starboard side, thence hoisted on board, deposited in the blubber-room, then cut up in lumps, which were handed on deck to be sliced, heated and "tried-out," and then finally run off into casks—in which to be transported to market.

In this instance we were occupied more than a week before getting quite through. In the latter part of this time we also celebrated a kind of harvest-feast, frying dough-nuts in the fresh oil—which does not get unpalatable until some time in the casks, when it turns rancid. Cooking these by the skimmerful, and by additional aid of liberal allowance of grog, we inaugurated a really jolly time, which we wound up with a "*shin-dig*," setting the timbers trembling and the crockery rattling in time, as if the good old ship were doing battle with the billows for us.

Dough-nuts fried in whale-oil, by the way, tasted to me just as good as any of those comestibles I ever had, cooked in different kind of oleagine; and I remarked that the native acquired relish for them, was not an observable iota less than my own—Mary Penny's mouth in particular, by no means a classical one, bearing witness to a very gross application to them and molasses.

Notwithstanding that adipose matter is reckoned a highly essential ingredient of food in these latitudes as in pemmican specially prepared for Arctic diet—the same being superabundantly charged with latent caloric, which digestion excites and distributes through the system, the natives, I would here remark, so far as my observation went, are not in the habit of using the blubber or fat as is ordinarily attributed to them. In fact they were guilty of taking on board more "fuel" of that kind, as of another more spirituous, when among us, than ever I saw them demolish in simply following their own habits, which instruct them, as before stated, to masticate their food without recourse to fire, without salt or any other condiment, and minus any kind of vegetables except occasionally what is contained in a deer's paunch, and to scrape off from the fragmentary morsels of their meat all fatty adhesions.

A present which we got at the same time of a young seal, was quite acceptable to us, one of the natives, named "Sugar-loaf," bringing one on board which he had captured, killing its mother. This little fellow, so plump and sleek, with such a silken pelt and such bright globules of eyes so intelligently blinking always, was soon installed as prime favorite on board. We hoped to have been enabled to present him to good society among the public in Barnum's Museum, along with the woolly horse and the fat woman, and to the freedom of the aquarium

then established, but fate willed otherwise, as the saying is; for, being allowed too much liberty, he performed a breach of confidence with us when about a week out, and without difficulty wended his way to a number of his species, rollicking in the waters and among the floes of the coast, returning to us, the disconsolate, no more.

Touching on the subject of this young seal, and of the relation of maternity so rudely broken in its history, reminds me of an idea that rose in my mind about this time—one that perhaps I may not be able to transpose to the mind of another fully, yet one that seems to me as it then did, *great*, and from the peculiar features distinguishing the circumstances from which it sprung indigenously, as if *original*—though indeed not so. Shall I set it forth in words? I will try.

Well, then, when one looks out upon the boundless ocean, he is naturally, by it, oppressed with the thought of infinitude, that is, in its ever recurring sameness; and again with a sense of desolation its apparent utter waste further appals. Then to notice from its interminable depths, frequenting the surface as if on a well known daisy-bank, or as if repairing to a pleasant pasture-glade, huge creatures whose monstrous size and distinct habits call for still more wonder and estrangement of sympathy from one. But to observe in that same meteless expanse these same unknowable creatures exercising the affection a

whale entertains for its calf, displaying the familiar ruling loves of our own lives, is to suddenly bring the far apart into juxtaposition. The mind seems then to be obliged to grasp something closely related to the unattainable, and staggers under the impressment of the sublime. The abstract idea here adduced was, and *is* to me: THE ONENESS OF THE UNIVERSE BEFORE THE LORD—*aye, a unity that no "science of evolution"* can ever rationally dispute. This seems to me about the grandest thought travel ever brought me.

To return to the narrative, we were then loaded up as well as our capacity in utensils would admit—all the casks being full. Nothing else was for us to do in Greenland, and we should at once have proceeded homeward; but we delayed, wanting some unequivocal token that the passage-way was clear—that Davis' Straits were open sufficiently for the venture; and this we could unmistakably have had only by seeing some vessel enter from the outside world.

A good long term elapsed ere this welcome sign greeted our expectant visions, we learning all the time how indeed "*hope deferred maketh the heart sick.*" Then the veritable indication was manifested. A whaler appeared in the offing and sailed into the gulf; and we all had pass before us a vision of our homes, while we made the last preparations for departure, consisting of taking farewells of all and sundry natives and foreigners and countrymen.

CHAPTER XII.

THE RETURN.

THOUGHT, or that adhibition of mind called Reflection, is often similar in some respects to a telescope. To look at objects some way off through the small end draws them so near, that what are in close contiguity to us are necessarily excluded, not without an impression of incongruity that their concomitant sounds are still nigh, and an expectation in the mind, behind its rationality, that acoustics should join with optics in confirming the illusion. To view the same from the large end of that instrument, we perceive them in very diminished proportions, and moving at such exaggerated distance, that one incontinently finds himself beginning to calculate the length of the interval in time which passed since the completion of an action, contemplated before the rays announcing it reached the eye's retina.

Just so from some coign of vantage, one may behold incident and character of very familiar mold, wrapped up in the fantastic lights of exaggerated consequence, as in another Brobdingnag, where every thing and being are vested with stature gigantic, and the importance of the least is magnified amazingly.

Or from a reverse position, one may look upon ordinary surroundings through a misty glimmer, in which they apparently dwindle as in another Lilliputia, where all things and creatures are arrayed in littleness, where one may mark how diminutive is man—how trifling his heart-engrossing pursuits—what an ephemera he is!

But without demanding extra appliances, without requiring select attitudes to be sought for the perception of her corresponding antitheses, Philosophy is to be found in the very common walks of life, with her budget of paradoxes—those truths representing upper, lower and side views, opening them up and showing us extremes, that we may from our proper selves, our inward discrimination, commend what is in neither of the opposites, but *between*.

Thus I ruminated as I leaned over the schooner's side shortly before sailing. I had come to regard the prospect of return, as invested with all the attractive powers of life, that lately I had supposed were drawing in the contrary direction. Then whales, and icebergs, and a foreign land and its people, and Arctic life and my associates therein, were conspicuous, as they now seemed trifling and uninteresting. And I could not help asking soliloquizingly, as with half-closed eyes I stood in reverie retrospective, whether or no in regard to *self*, we are not always more or less in the habit of looking through the small end. Thus I accounted for the phenomenon of the caprice.

And again: "'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view." But "such is life," a tangled scene of normal unrest, whose aims have only to be attained to lose their attractiveness—to be reached, to have their opposites supplanting them. Man is but a shuttlecock driven to and fro, but his best interests have their abiding place where all that are most conflicting are *conserved.*

We did not start for two days after the advent of the new arrival, "*The Mary and George,*" barque from New London, she reporting the ice to be rather close, a little way outside. Two more vessels then appearing, we were inspirited to spread our canvas to the breeze, homeward bound. The whole fleet which had wintered together moved out in company under a light wind. Soon separating, however, we arrived on the borders of the pack-ice at diverging points; and each of us making our own way, on the third day out, we were without a single sail in view.

Great floes and icebergs were now stretching out before us, and coming into view like vast fields sentineled by ghostly hills. These seemed to present, to scan them from any distance, impenetrable barriers to progress, but we found openings as we advanced, into which we entered courageously,—industriously threading our way through what seemed their very center—the men often getting off upon the ice, and tugging the vessel through as upon a canal.

In some places we had to engineer our way thus

with considerable labor. In others, where we observed an auspicious movement of the body, or when we had no hope of accomplishing aught by exertion, we made deliberate pause, putting out "ice-hooks" for anchors, and advancing as soon as the channel widened sufficiently for that purpose.

On one of these floes we had an encounter which should be noted, I reckon, as it was the only brush with polar bears I was favored with, though when in Greenland, several of our ship's company had the felicity to meet more than a few—at different times.

A large she-bear—a Mrs. Bruin, with two cubs under her maternal wing—or fore-shoulder, I should say, seeing bears lack wings—was seen at the foot of a small 'berg, from which ran out, as it were, a marsh of ice. She and her progeny were out in this detached settlement doing a little private family fishing, and apparently enjoying the vernal breath as much as their ursine natures would admit of.

Our boat was lowered from the vessel for the purpose of bagging the group, and I was one of its sportive crew. We made a landing on the floe without disturbing them to any extent, a low growl as we proceeded being all the notice given us. Several shots were fired when we got near enough, some of them evidently taking effect, as we succeeded in bringing *mater amata* to her feet sud-

denly, when she stood looking at us uneasily, showing her teeth and growling more loudly, having the cubs on her further side.

We ventured nearer and repeated our attentions, drawing additional proofs of discomfort from her. Both she and one of the cubs, which had exposed itself, were then evidently wounded, the little thing worrying about like a young one with a cut finger. As we crawled up still nearer, we drove her and the unwounded cub into the water, where they found escape among the ice, and got round to the other side of the 'berg from us. The little wounded cub was picked off while endeavoring to follow—shot through the head and killed at short range. Our second mate relieved the infant Bruin of the nice, soft, warm pelt for which it had no further use, taking it home, as he declared, for a robe to his *intended* father-in-law's sleigh. That man was "*wise in his generation!*"

Twenty-two days it took us to get out into clear water again. There we still saw many icebergs, but no ice further impeded us. Some splendid sights again greeted us, among these latter, mountains seemingly of crystal, bespangled with jewels, sailing to their melting places in the far south or merely changing their moorings—the waves tossing and flinging about them even when it was calm, as they bobbed and nodded to us, or more distantly flared at us, or with dark-grey frownings, left us to

our course. Fairy domes of amethyst and of ruby—crystal palaces—far surpassing in magnificence of design and execution that of London, appeared and faded away as we glided through their wide field of existence. How varied the styles of travestied architecture manifest among them, and with what gorgeous dyes and lustres they at times reflected the light—depending upon the angle they occupied for their luminosity or opacity. In a former chapter I have inserted an attempted description of one supereminently grand which I saw on the voyage out; therefore I here will not dwell further on the topic. But how all the dazzling beauty and superlative grandeur of their presence does impress the spectator is beyond all human language, I think, fitly to relate! Perhaps some American Bierstadt or some British Turner might with a brush and pallet accomplish what fails tongue or pen to do.

After getting out of the straits, our passage became very tempestuous, and the roughness, as it set in at first, was merely a presage to what speedily succeeded. We rode along under reduced sail in the meantime. And on the 18th of September, while off the Banks of Newfoundland, we formed a reacquaintance with the equinoctial gales.

The rain now descended, and the wind blew upon that little schooner, like as a West Indian tornado had got adrift, and had there broken loose. "A living gale" was now upon us. The sea rose in mountains,

its surf seeming to toy with the clouds, and sank in valleys, when the rocky bed of its fundament seemed about to be disclosed. It was a wonder to see our small vessel—a mere cockle-shell as it then looked—climbing the great swelling breast—*the hillside*—of some huge billow, and when she got to the summit, it was a still greater wonder to see her sinking down into the trough, and not from the force of the fall striking bottom, though that were "half a mile below," or swamping in the awful basin's turmoil. All the canvas not blown into tatters from the spars, was taken in, and we lay to before the storm, merely striving to avoid a broadside from the billows.

During this time I am of the opinion that I experienced my very toughest experience of "*life on the ocean wave!*" Oh, it is not what it is often cracked up as being, nor what it looks like in a fair morning entering or leaving port! It was not the same thing at all that I had read of when at school, or when first my fancy was enlisted by it to serve beneath its pennants. It was like seeing a tame bear in a show, and getting there familiar with him by little gifts of bon-bons, and then meeting the same animal in his native wilds or on the ice. Ah, then look out! But

> "There's a little cherub that sits up aloft
> To keep watch for the life of poor Jack."

The horrors of exposure to storm ashore are generally alleviated in many ways, by extra supply of

wrappings, refreshments, etc. On shipboard how different—for a hand before the mast, at all events! No food could be prepared on account of the sea washing over the galley; nor could we even get access to the raw material, as it was all battened down under hatches. A cask of hard bread which happened on deck was broken by the strokes of the waves. We got into that, and what we could we secured of it before the last vestige of hoop and stave was swept overboard. It was no longer *hard* bread, however. That qualification to the name had become inappropriate, inasmuch as the soaking in salt water "*improved*" it into *soft* bread; though, it must be allowed, the *improvement*, notwithstanding that the condiment of hunger was applied, became very questionable. We were indeed hungry; and sleep, while the gale lasted, could only be obtained in cat-naps, during the comparative lulls. It is my opinion that Henry IV. was an old blatant humbug, who knew little of what he was talking, when, in his soliloquy on sleep, he imputes to the sailor-boy such a nice dose of it, in just such circumstances as we were then in, and I also surmise that the immortal Shakespeare knew his man well enough, and was making him speak only *in propria persona*, where he says:

> Wilt thou upon the high and giddy mast
> Seal up the ship-boy's eyes, and rock his brains
> In cradle of the rude tempestuous surge;
> And in the visitation of the winds,

Who take the ruffian billows by the top,
Curling their monstrous heads, and hanging them
With deafening clamors in the slippery clouds,
That, with the hurly death itself awakes?
Canst thou, O, partial sleep! give thy repose
To the wet sea-boy in an hour so rude?

No! Emphatically *no!* and nobody but a silly unknowing old king would ever ask such a silly, unknowing question, either for information, or for rhetorical effect.

Our oilskins were of small service in keeping out the water; so complete was its saturation and its wash, that it left no single opening at neck, sleeves, or seam that it did not fully avail itself of; and the flood-fiends just laughed in their sleeves or in ours, at the puny contrivances we had adopted to baffle them. Oh, we could hear them too in the wild slash of the waters, and in the tumultuous rush of the air, while for dear life we clung to whatever came handiest, to the bulwarks of the schooner, if on deck, or to her spars, if above the swirl, as we generally were. Soon the spars alone were left; for the violence of the storm increasing, and its continued action becoming effective, our ship's bulwarks yielded to it, and were swept away, together with some forty barrels of oil which had been lashed to them.

With this parting salute the gale quickly moderated around us, owing partly, we believed, to the quantity of oil spread out upon the waters, the contents of our forty barrels, but as we were now "in

the land of mist and fog," another trouble succeeded, for shortly the wind abated considerably, on independent grounds, I suppose, and then died out; but the swell and turmoil of the waters reasserting themselves, and the habitual mist of the region coming on very dense, so that it could be almost cut into slices and stowed away, if we had a hold big enough to contain it, we could make no progress in it, and were in constant dangers, magnified, it might be, from being unseen. If we had only had provision for that kind of cargo, I am disposed to think it would have paid, mixing it with an homogeneous element, at the time of the discussion upon the currency. A similar cargo might pay here yet. We tried no experiment of the kind though, for it was so thick we could not see more than an inch or two ahead. To this was due the most dreadful catastrophe that I ever had part in or was witness to.

A man at the bows was suddenly startled by what looked to him like the spectre of another vessel within almost touching distance. We had somewhat neglected the blowing of our fog-horn, suspecting no proximity to any others where we were. The danger seemed imminent of a collision. The alarm spread like a flash of electricity. We were aghast with fear. Neither vessel had any headway, however, and both were in perfect darkness as to where they were, exactly, or in what direction to head,

even if they had had a propelling power on board. This evidently saved us from being stove in by the stranger so close upon us, or she being so by us. We all rushed forward in an attempt to discern something of her; but into the mist she had lurched so far again that but the slightest adumbration of a portion of her could be perceived. None on board of her had as yet noticed our vessel, and no sound came from her that we could detect above the noise of the dashing and tossing waves. She might be a deserted hulk for all we could tell, or some approach to "*The Flying Dutchman*," and a superstitious murmuring was heard around, when arose the trumpet call of our captain, hailing her with: "*Ship ahoy!*" An answer promptly sped to us. The voice responding was plainly articulate, and we recognized it at once. "*Captain Allan!*" "*The Quickstep!*" we uttered in confused chorus.

"*Is that you, Captain Allan?*" was the rejoinder of our captain to what was said, which I strangely forget. "*Yes*," he at once answered, "*we are water-logged, and in a foundering condition with every boat washed from their davits. For God's sake can you help us?*" "*All right!*" was the ready reply, but before what had best be done could be thought out, a tremendous sea struck us. We suppose it threw her on her beam-ends, and that she descended with her two and twenty souls, into that vast maw of ocean, that place of unscooped

graves, without sending up another voice that we could hear.

> "And the sea yawned around her like a hell,
> And down she sucked with her the whirling wave."

We were powerless to aid. No boat could be lowered, and even if it could, no lives in her could have been saved, as the suction must have drawn all on board beneath with the wreck, and we had, moreover, but one boat left to make the unavailing risk. We were appalled by the terrible incident, yet did it scarcely affect us, as on recalling it, I should think it ought to have. We were in fact quite too near the grasp of the same fell calamity ourselves, to dwell in pity over a fate which embraces others; and as the mad sea swept over them, and as the mist enshrouded their sepulchre, and their requiem was sung by the hoarse billows in our hearing, we thought all were premonitions of our own doom. So we drowned pity in stern, cold self-commiseration.

Through the mercies of a kind Providence, we were enabled to surmount the fearful dangers then yawning about us, and howling for more prey; but those long weary days that knew no sun, and were unilluminated by even the Aurora Borealis, the gruesome nights, when hope's lamp burnt dim in the socket, were periods that tried our souls. It is at such times that man, with his dominant will and boasted strength, and vain assumptions, feels his

weakness as that of helplessness itself. Then, too, with grim Death peering into his face from out fathomless depths, and threatening to cut off on the very threshold of expectation blest views of home, he recalls the lessons of a purer life, of his earlier days; he recollects smittenly the strains which arose from the family altar or the village church, remembering distinctly their very attenuated cadences dwindling in the glen, or adown the streamlet's side. There comes home to him a vision of the faith "of the days of other years" lit up by earnest convictions—not of memory but of present being. Then it is that an imploring cry ascends from the hearts of old tars erewhile supposed callous as tanned rhinoceros-hide.

"*They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters, these see the works of the Lord and his wonders in the deep;*" and when all other help is cut off, they then will seek Him as the only ark which can ride in safety through the fearful troubles that, like giant-polypi, with outstretched arms reach to grasp and to hug remorselessly. With us a seemingly kinder Providence dealt than with many in that dreadful hurricane:

> "The storm was changed into a calm
> At His command and will,
> So that the waves which raged before
> They quiet were and still."

Yes; for the forces of "Nature" acting harmoniously, as according to laws of *Infinite Wisdom*, suf-

fering no jarring interposition save for universal effect in the past, and mayhap again, are *still* maintained in their passive action by the power which originally conceived and framed them. It is therefore right, in this seminary of the Heavens, this nursery of intelligence where we are, that thankfulness should bloom forth at escape from dreaded terrors, and that that sentiment should be directed to Him who overrules the storm, without a superstitious notion of special Divine intervention in our behalf, as childishly some may entertain. To doubt the possibility of a miracle is to be sunk in a condition of gross ignorance with regard to the nature of the origin of things; and to be ready to attribute a miracle, in any degree expressing a reversal of natural order for special benefit, according to contracted idea or wish, is to be sunk in a condition of gross ignorance with regard to the nature of the *end* of things. In both premised instances the power and wisdom of Deity are assailed. I hope it was with some more enlightenment that I cherished great gratitude for my preservation through "a sea of troubles." But I fear we illustrated but the truth of the saying:

> "When the devil was sick the devil a monk would be;
> When the devil got well the devil a monk was he."

Then the sun appeared sucking up the mist as for his morning potations; and, with a gentle breeze filling the few sails we managed to set, we skimmed

along over a shining, corrugated surface, leaving our comrades of "*The Quickstep*" where they are. Far beneath in our wake? No, gathered elsewhere, without loss.

Thirty-five days from date of our departure from Cumberland Gulf we were skirting the shores of Long Island, our fancies launched upon rivulets of delight in seeing once more fields and furrows yet somewhat green, the trees with their variegated autumnal foliage, men and horses at work along the roads and on the farms, lovely residences dotting the landscapes, and all seeming to wear a welcome for us poor wanderers, who would not get much of that after all, generally.

One of our men, as we were passing a certain spot, seemed specially moved. I saw the rugged fellow look out upon the scene fixedly with such a queer unwonted look of poetic reverie that I was induced to make some inquiry of him, curious to learn what his thoughts might have been. "Do you see that little house all white, away yonder on the other side of that grove, just below yon hill?" said he. "Yes," said I, without paying much attention to the spot, but to him. "Well," replied he, curtly, "that is where my wife and family live." A pause of a minute or two ensued, during which time my interest had got centered in the right direction. Then he spoke again with excitement: "Oh, there she is, standing by the door and the little fellow

playing at the end of the house. She cannot tell I am so near. I wonder if she does not see the vessel and is trying to make her out, but she cannot; the poor craft looks so shaken up." With that he waved a rag he had got hold of, and continued waving it, every now and again giving a rub to his eyes, accompanied by a stealthy, guilty look over his shoulder, as if he wanted to know if any one noticed his surcharged emotion. No sign that the inmates of the cottage observed him came, however. I suppose he "made tracks" for it when we got into port, taking them by surprise; for,

> "There, was his life—
> The ocean to the river of his thoughts."

We were all taken by surprise also, when we landed; for we *did* expect to have netted something after our long voyage and exposure to direct hardships, seeing that though it was not a very successful one in some senses, that could not be charged against us nor against our fortune even, but against the management in not having supplied us sufficiently in the way of casks. The tender which was to have furnished us with more had sunk; but the company had had her insured, and doubtless had thereby pocketed a nice sum, covering completely all loss. Yet that was all nought to our advantage. So they chose to opine; and now, after more than a year, we returned to find, when our balance sheets had been

made out, and the losses and tear and wear of the ship were put further to account, that our interests in the profits were at the minimum figure represented by the cabalistic letter "0."

Working in shares, as whalers are generally engaged to do, did not, in this instance, pay—*the whalers.* The noble generosity of the company came to our relief, notwithstanding; and we each got the munificent sum of five dollars apiece to clear out and find another ship—the profits accruing to the owners from the trip having been, according to my calculation, thirteen thousand dollars!!!

As I stepped from the office of this wealthy partnership with my petty five dollar greenback in my already half-opened palm, pious sentiments were not uppermost, I am sorry to say, in my rebellious swelling bosom. Joy at reaching home did not cause me to overleap the bounds of propriety, and to embrace the wealthy, purse-proud citizen, one of "our owners" whom, with gold watch in fob and with massive gold chain and pendant signets dangling from a jewel-anchor in his vest button-hole, I met in the door-way without receiving any notice from him.

My first resolution—and oh, gentle reader, *it was* firmly taken!—*was never more to ship before the mast.* I do only wish that my life's sequel could demonstrate that *it had been as firmly kept.* But to

any one situated as I was, it must be admitted, temptations and obstructions toward this latter, legitimately presented.

Impecunious in the last degree, with an open door at hand where, as an advance, a ready supply for present emergencies could be obtained, what blame though I, or those just like me, should turn out to be weak, silly flies, who walk into the cunning spider's parlor in response to his adroit coaxing invitation. What else can a sailor do in such predicament, but throw hindering resolutions overboard to the sharks, and with a hitch at his over-alls, turn to and accept terms, sign articles and again embark? So I did exactly; and for the South Seas after sperm whales, animals much more formidable than their congeners of the North Atlantic, a few months later I set sail.

FINALE.

And now, reader, we have arrived together at that page of my narration when the word "Finis" has to be written, and where our parting has to take place. It is now becoming in me, if you have been in the least indulgent to my very obvious imperfections of execution and style, to tender you my sincere thanks; for I am well aware of their existence—if you have been wearing the spectacles of severe criticism in perusing my little tome, and are censorious, to crave your generous complacency, and benign

countenance; for I have done my best to please you, regardless of expense—if you are impatient with such prolix reading, to offer you my sincere sympathy; for I also have been wearied in spinning such a long-winded yarn—and if you are good natured in giving me sufferance, to furnish you proof of an homogeneity within my heart; for I am ready now to pledge myself: "*that with the proper encouragement from a discerning and indulging public*," I may again ere long plume my pinions of authorship for another flight, viz., that of endeavoring to entertain with recital of some of my adventures in those paradisiacal and fruitful regions, those true "*gardens of the Hesperides*," the South-sea Islands.

Reader dear Reader, *Au revoir!*

FINIS.

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